Today's The Herald-Palladium included inside

Brandywine falls to Lumen Christi in state semis
Page B1

Stay Safe

Be mindful of your surroundings, especially in unfamiliar or dimly lit areas. Trust your instincts - if something feels off, move to a safer location if possible. Encourage neighbors to establish a neighborhood watch program to keep our communities safe.

Berrien County Sheriff's Office
Crime Prevention Unit
919 Port Street
St. Joseph, MI 49085
(269) 983-7141 Ext. 7221
www.bcsheriff.org

Sheriff, Chuck Heit

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR UP-TO-DATE • CRIME PREVENTION & SAFETY TIPS

Dowagiac News

Established 1897 • Serving Dowagiac, Sister Lakes and Cassopolis **MARCH 21, 2026** leaderpub.com • A publication of The Herald-Palladium **$4**

Dowagiac celebrates Students of the Month

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — Six local students have been selected for recognition by teachers and faculty for their outstanding performance in school last month.

Nominated by teachers and faculty from their respective schools in the Dowagiac Union Schools district were Emily Henry, Dylan Shepardson, Alyx Halcomb, Grace Schultz, Erika Miller and Luke Critzer received plaques and T-shirts with their names on them for their accomplishments and attitudes in the classroom. Sister Lakes' December Student of the Month Calvin Mitchell was also honored for his performance.

Henry is a junior at Dowagiac Union High School and is the daughter of Brian and Shelly Henry. Principal Kelly Millin described Henry as a leader both inside and outside of the classroom and said Henry was nominated by social studies teacher Brian Litton for her leadership and academic excellence.

"When I first met Emily last year, she was a little timid in the classroom," Litton stated. "She grew throughout the school year to the point where she was one of my most engaged students. This year, I

See **STUDENTS**, page A5

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Chamber of Commerce representatives and business owners gathered at Affordable Lawn Care Solutions, 205 Spaulding St., Dowagiac, celebrating the occasion with a ribbon tying ceremony.

Taking root

Affordable Lawn Care Solutions hosts ribbon-tying ceremony for new Dowagiac location

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — A local Tree and Lawn Care Company was officially welcomed into the Dowagiac business community on Tuesday.

Chamber of Commerce representatives and business owners gathered at Affordable Lawn Care Solutions, 205 Spaulding St., Dowagiac, celebrating the occasion with a ribbon tying ceremony. The 205 Spaulding Street building is a historical office building formerly home to the Dowagiac Daily News as well as the Round Oak Stove Co. administration. Instead of a traditional

See **LAWN CARE**, page A4

Local leaders discuss a possible SMCAS and Medic 1 merger

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Correspondent

NILES — Area leaders heard the what and why behind a possible merger of the Medic 1 and Southwestern Michigan Community Ambulance Services at community meetings Monday and Tuesday and are now turning their attention to the "how."

Community meetings were held Monday afternoon at Corewell Health in St. Joseph and Tuesday morning at the Niles City Council chambers in Niles. Each meeting was attended mainly by local governmental leaders and ambulance staff.

The two ambulance services have been talking about a possible merger for the last few years and hired a consultant in early 2025. That consultant, Matt Zavadsky, has many years of experience in the emergency services field and met with area leaders here over the last several months in preparing his report.

His presentations this week covered how ambulance services both here and around the country have gotten to the point where many are finding it difficult to continue to operate. He offered specific recommendations of what SMCAS and Medic 1 can do to improve their financial and operational situations including a possible merger.

Zavadsky began his presentation by calling both services "excellent" and saying residents are blessed to have them. Having said that, he said he found a number of areas where the services can improve when it comes to billing and staffing and that their outlook could be improved dramatically if they merge into one larger organization and achieve efficiencies.

He urged the services to raise their rates to insurance companies to gain more revenue and to also change how they deliver services. He pointed out that only a small portion of calls require advanced life support services and can be handled by people who are not paramedics which would free paramedics to answer the calls where they're most needed.

He acknowledged that merging the operation side of the two services will be "much easier" than merging their governance. Currently each service is operated by boards made up of local municipal leaders.

"You can't just combine the boards but find a new way to govern," he said. "You need to decide in your communities how you want to merge and create a new identity. This needs to be a community conversation."

Oronoko Township Supervisor and Medic 1 Board member Mike Hildebrand was among those in agreement. "This has gotten us to the point of what needs to be done, the next step is the how," he said.

He asked Zavadsky if he was available to consult on the how and got an affirmative answer. "It will be good to have a tour guide," Hildebrand then said. "It takes heat off some of the conversation that needs to

See **MERGER**, page A4

School board talks grade level centers, honors St. Francis Outreach

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — The Dowagiac Union Schools Board of Education hosted its monthly meeting Monday at Dowagiac Middle School.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, a local parent addressed the school board regarding the transition to Grade Level Centers beginning with the 2026-27 school year. Under the new structure, the district's four elementary buildings will be reorganized to serve specific grade bands rather than traditional K-5 populations:

■ Justus Gage Elementary will serve as the K–1st Grade Building under the leadership of Principal Alicia Stout.

■ Kincheloe Elementary will serve as the 2nd–3rd Grade Building led by Principal Ryan Zietlow.

■ Sister Lakes Elementary will become the 4th–5th Grade Building with Principal Bryan Henry.

■ Patrick Hamilton Elementary will become the district's Early Childhood Center.

While the parent supported the district's goals to achieve academic equity and specialized teacher collaboration, she asked district leadership for objective data on its decision, including questions such as performance expectations after year one, what the what the district's "Plan B" is if transportation costs exceed the budget or if driver shortages impact the reliability of the new routes and how the district plans to ensure that the "sibling split" of siblings between buildings does not further contribute to the district's enrollment crisis.

"The Grade Level Center model increases transitions for our youngest and most vulnerable children," she said. "Other districts have attempted this model and ultimately reverted back to the K-5 neighborhood model. I firmly believe our community deserves to see the

See **BOARD**, page A5

Photo provided

Superintendent Greg Blomgren (center) addresses the Dowagiac Union Schools Board of Education. Also pictured: Stephanie Cooper-Tucker (left), Robert Ickes (right).

Today's obituaries • Page A3

Doug Horein, Stephen Jess, Thomas Colley, Danielle Kirtdoll, Lucia Hendershott, H. Elaine Parrish, Earl Hansen, Jane Clevenger, Jerry Hurlbutt, Dr. Stephen E. Jess, Betty Gillhouse, Ricky L. Krueger, Lefoy Anderson, James Green, Frederic R. Smith, Sue Mansfield, Timothy Curtis, Devin Bidwell

Inside today's Herald-Palladium

Automotive	C6	Focus	B1	Opinion	B6
Business	C4	Food	B7	Puzzles	B4
Comics	B5	Home & Garden	C7	Television	D3

6 54708 08550 2

$26 FAMILY BUNDLE

Please Present Coupon

MEAL MADNESS DEAL

- 12 WINGS
- 2 LARGE SIDES
- 6 TENDERS
- DIPPING SAUCE

306 S. 11th Street | Niles | 269-262-0017
1323 E. Napier Ave. | Benton Harbor | 269-926-4200

LOUISIANA KITCHEN

POPEYES

FRANKLY

Tips and quips

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip or a quip? Call Frankly at 269-687-7700 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com.

■ Ryan A. Tucker Field is simply awesome. The renovation is amazing.

■ Much love and prayer for the family who lost their son during the storm.

■ I found the Oscar tributes very moving. Babs singing "The Way We Were" for Robert Redford was really special. Billy Crystal's tribute to Rob Reiner, and having the actors on stage, was really something.

■ Congratulations Brandywine on a great basketball season. Standards never graduate.

■ I fear these gas prices are going to push us well beyond $4 per gallon. It's hard to get by nowadays with the high costs of everything else. Two promises this President made was to get prices down and not go to war. He has failed miserably on those two things.

■ Hats off to coach Josh Hood and the Bobcats for representing southwest Michigan with class.

■ Now that the illegal tariffs need to be paid back to the American business importers, is that money going to hit my wallet? Heck no. The businesses will keep it and get a windfall of taxpayer money.

■ Saw that Affordable Lawn Care Solutions has set up shop in Dowagiac. Good people. It's always great to see a quality business choose to plant roots in town.

Flowers Early Learning CEO named Michigan Head Start Association Executive Director

SUBMITTED

PAW PAW — Flowers Early Learning announced today that Chief Executive Officer Chanda Hillman has been named the next Executive Director of the Michigan Head Start Association (MHSA), where she will lead statewide efforts to support and advocate for Head Start and Early Head Start programs serving children and families across Michigan.

HILLMAN

Hillman currently serves as CEO of Flowers Early Learning, a nonprofit organization providing Head Start and Early Head Start services to children and families across Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties. Hillman's journey with the organization began as a parent in the program in 2014. Inspired by the impact Head Start had on her family, she joined Flowers Early Learning in 2016 as a part-time recruiter. In 2018, Hillman was selected to become only the third CEO in the organization's more than 50-year history.

During her tenure, Hillman worked alongside the organization's board of directors, staff, families, and community partners to strengthen services for children and families and expand community awareness of the critical role high-quality early childhood education plays in supporting families and strengthening local communities.

"Head Start has always been deeply personal to me," said Hillman. "I first experienced the program as a parent, and I have had the incredible privilege of serving alongside the dedicated staff, families, and community partners who make this work possible every day. Flowers Early Learning will always hold a very special place in my heart."

Under Hillman's leadership, Flowers Early Learning continued building on its long-standing legacy of serving children and families across Southwest Michigan through comprehensive early childhood education, health, and family support services.

"Chanda's journey reflects the very heart of Head Start," said Brian Saxton, Chair of the Flowers Early Learning Board of Directors. "She experienced the program as a parent, dedicated her career to supporting families, and became a leader who strengthened this organization and our community. While we will certainly miss her leadership, we are incredibly proud to see her take this next step as she advocates for children and families across Michigan. The strong foundation and bold vision she helped create will continue to move forward, ensuring Flowers Early Learning remains a leader for children and families in Southwest Michigan. The Board remains deeply committed to that vision and confident the organization will continue advancing this important work for the children, families, and communities we serve."

Hillman will continue serving as CEO of Flowers Early Learning through April while working closely with the Board of Directors to ensure a thoughtful transition and to begin the search for the organization's fourth CEO.

Flowers Early Learning remains committed to its mission of supporting children and families and will continue its work providing high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive family services across the region.

Vandalia man injured in Calvin Township crash

By PMG STAFF

CALVIN TOWNSHIP — A Vandalia man was injured Tuesday in a single vehicle crash in Calvin Township, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

At approximately 7:20 a.m. Tuesday, deputies responded to a single-vehicle crash in the area of Union Road and Mt Zion Street in Calvin Township.

The investigation showed that a vehicle driven by James Huffman, 49, of Vandalia, was northbound on Union Road when he lost control on the snowy road, causing his vehicle to leave the roadway and strike a tree. Huffman was transported by SMCAS Ambulance to Memorial Hospital for injuries sustained in the traffic crash.

Cass Family Clinic appoints new community health worker manager

By PMG STAFF

CASSOPOLIS — Cass Family Clinic has appointed Michele Lofton as its new community health worker manager.

She will oversee all community health workers (CHWs) at its locations in Cassopolis, Niles and Dowagiac, as well as the Mobile Clinic.

LOFTON

"I'm excited to provide guidance to our invaluable community health workers at Cass Family Clinic and build a cohesive, solid team that can provide the support and services that our patients need," said Lofton.

Lofton, who has a master's degree in social work from Michigan State University, has worked with the elderly and individuals with developmental disabilities for over 38 years. Before joining Cass Family Clinic, she served as a residential director in Indiana and as a care manager at Cass County Council on Aging and Cass County Community Mental Health for 20 years.

Lofton will manage a team of eight colleagues who serve as liaisons between CFC patients and community partners who provide essential support such as food, transportation, shelter, diabetic and hypertension management, individual health assessments, and basic healthy-lifestyle assistance.

"I take pride in supporting our patients who lack access to transportation, food, and healthcare services," said Lofton, a former Cassopolis Village Council trustee and president. "Cass Family Clinic's mission emphasizes eliminating the barriers that prevent patients from leading healthy lives. To that end, it is essential that community resources are coordinated and made available to all of our patients."

"Michele understands firsthand the myriad factors that impact patients in our community and their health," said Cass Family Clinic CEO Joe Gavan. "As she oversees our community health workers, Michele will also be out in the community assessing needs, building relationships, establishing trusted partnerships, identifying additional resources, and providing training and leadership for our existing team. Her role is integral to expanding the reach of our care teams as they connect patients to care, vital resources, and essential support services throughout Southwest Michigan."

> **"I take pride in supporting our patients who lack access to transportation, food, and healthcare services."**
>
> **MICHELE LOFTON**
> Cass Family Clinic community health worker manager

MONUMENTS By Design LLC
Cemetery Memorial Stones
21945 M60 East, Cassopolis, MI 49031
Phone: 269.445.3848 Fax: 269.445.3828
www.monumentsbydesignllc.com
monumentsbydesign@gmail.com

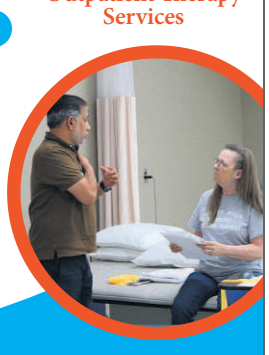
We'll be there when you need us most

Mission Hills
Memorial Chapel, Crematory & Gardens
- Since 1953 -
Niles • 269-683-8333 • MissionHillsMemorialCCG.com

Robert Clayton
40 Years Experience
PLASTERING & DRYWALL
• Fast Dependable Service
• Clean Quality Work
• Finish and Repair
• Water Damage Specialist
269-695-7621
4060 W. Bertrand • Niles, MI

JIM D'S Body Shop

M-51 SOUTH, DOWAGIAC, MICHIGAN
269-782-2728
"Collision Repairs Are Our Business"
Body and Frame Repair
Insurance Work Welcome

Continuing Community Care
CASS COUNTY Outpatient Therapy Services
Open to the public! All ages welcome!
Physical Therapy
Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy
We accept Medicare, Medicaid and most commercial insurances. Call to set up and schedule an appointment!

269-445-3801 • casscountymedicalcarefacility.org
23770 Hospital St., Cassopolis, MI 49031

Ask Us About Our Pre-Need Plans
Paul E. Mayhew Funeral Home, Inc.
26863 W. Main Street, Edwardsburg, MI
269-663-5345
Paul E. Mayhew, Owner

Get Fit, Stay Fit
The Cass County COA has outstanding fitness centers at both locations. Each center offers a variety of cardiovascular fitness machines and weight training equipment as well as In-Person and Zoom Fitness Classes. Trained instructors provide assistance, advice and class instruction to help you meet your fitness goals.
• Balance, Stretch & Stability • Cardio Challenge
• H.I.L.I.T. • S.E.A.T. • Tai Chi • Yoga
Cass County COA Enhancing Life
(800) 323-0390 | (269) 445-8110
www.CassCOA.org
facebook.com/CassCOA
Lowe Center
60525 Decatur Rd.
Cassopolis, MI 49031
Front Street Crossing
227 S. Front Street
Dowagiac, MI 49047

CASS FAMILY CLINIC
Our Family, Caring For Yours.
HEALTH CARE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Accepting Walk-in's and New Patients
Monday - Thursday 8:30am to 4:00pm
(269) 445-3874
Bring your I.D, insurance, & medications
Debit or Credit Only
Scan for the clinic's locations & times
• Flu Shots
• Primary Care
• Patient education
• Blood pressure checks
• Health & wellness exams
• Sports & wellchild physicals
• Other healthcare needs

J&H OIL CO.
Choose The Leader In:
• Fuel Oil Delivery for Home
• Agriculture & Commercial Fuels
• Service Station & Convenience Store Resalers
• Pacific Pride 24 Hour Commercial
• Fuel Locations in Cassopolis, Byron Center & Owosso

Contract/Fixed Price Options
• Volume Discounts
• Motor oils & hydraulics in bulk & packaged quantities
• Premium Diesel Fuel
• Hoses & Filters in stock
QUALITY PETROLEUM DISTRIBUTORS
J&H Oil is your DEF Solution for Diesel Engines as Required on 2010 or Newer Vehicles. Available in 2.5 gallon, 55 gallon and Totes
PACIFIC PRIDE · Phillips 66 Lubricants · Mobil · Marathon · Citgo
J&H OIL CO.
Quality Petroleum Distributors
604 Water Street, Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 445-2441 • (800) 424-3885 | WWW.JHOIL.COM

LEADER PUBLICATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE
Publisher
Rich Cains
219-455-2349
rich.cains@leaderpub.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE & DISTRIBUTION
Amy Glover
(269-687-7717
amy.glover@leaderpub.com

EDITORIAL
MANAGING EDITOR
Maxwell Harden
231-750-5776
max.harden@leaderpub.com

ADVERTISING
Dennis Hinsey
269-362-1525
dennis.hinsey@leaderpub.com

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
269-429-1396

Established in 1886
www.leaderpub.com

Published Saturday except holidays when the postal service does not deliver mail: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day at 25 N. Second St., Niles, Michigan, by Leader Publications LLC. Periodicals paid at the Niles Post Office, 741 Broadway St. Postmaster: Send change of address to Circulation Manager, The Daily Star, 25 N. Second St., Niles, MI 49120.
Home Delivery by mail is local: $7.50/month, out of town: $10.50/month.
USPS 390-620

OBITUARIES

Douglas Horein

February 23, 1959 – March 10, 2026

Douglas Allen Horein, 67, of Mishawaka, Indiana, passed away Tuesday, March 10, 2026 in his home after an extended illness. His life began February 23, 1959 in South Bend, Indiana to Terry L. and Kathryn "Kay" E. Horein, who preceded him in death.

Doug graduated from Penn High School and spent much of his life working in construction. He began his career working with Terry Horein Builders and continued in the construction field for many years. He was known as a hard worker who took pride in his work and the people he worked alongside.

More than anything, Doug valued time with his family. He loved the outdoors, especially hunting, and enjoyed sharing those moments and memories with the people he cared about most. He will be remembered for his generous and caring nature and his own sense of humor.

Doug will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his daughters, Katie Horein, Kaysie (Cameron) Sly; son, Cory Horein; granddaughters, Reggie Renae, Jordie Anne; sisters, Debby (Steve) Kildow, Donna (Brett) Schrock; brother, David (Celeste) Horein; and many extended family members.

Family and friends will gather Sunday, March 15, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. until time of service at 3:00 p.m. in Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street, Niles. Doug's memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved him. The family prefers contributions in Doug's memory be made to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, 1016 West Jackson Boulevard, #1073, Chicago, Illinois 60607.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritter wickens.com.

Earl Hansen

January 14, 1927 – March 13, 2026

Earl Norman Hansen, 99, of Niles, died peacefully, Friday, March 13, 2026. His life began January 14, 1927 in Stanton, Michigan the third of three born to Harold and Jessie Hansen. Earl graduated from Eau Claire High School in 1945. He then went on to serve his country in the Army Air Corp. during World War II. Shortly after, he married Audrey Leiting on September 4, 1949.

Earl worked for Kawneer for nine years and then went on to work for National Standard for over thirty years before retiring. He was a member of Berrien Center Bible Church where he was involved as a board member and head usher. Earl and Audrey volunteered their time at the Berrien County Youth Fair, both at the gates and in the Grandstands for over sixty years.

Earl will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by one daughter, Diane K. (Dr. James) Grannell of Niles; one son, Kirk W. (Debra) Hansen of Niles; four grandchildren, Dr. Justin (Alicia) Grannell, Josh (Marissa) Grannell, Jami Grannell, Jenna Grannell; six great grandchildren, Peyton, Connor, Jade, Jaren, Vivian, Jovi Grannell and a number of nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife of sixty-four years, Audrey Hansen; one daughter, Dawn Hansen; one sister Viola Rudowske of Watkinsville, Georgia and one brother, Maurice Hansen of Berrien Center. Family and friends will gather Monday, March 23, 2026 from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. in Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street, Niles and one hour prior to his service on Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. in Berrien Center Bible Church, 8830 M-140 Berrien Center, Michigan 49102. Earl will be laid to rest next to his beloved wife, Audrey in Mission Hills Memorial Gardens.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Earl be made to Berrien Center Bible Church 8830 M-140 Berrien Center, Michigan 49102 or the Berrien County Youth Fair 9122 US-Highway 31 Box 7 Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103. Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

H. Elaine Parrish

June 6, 1940 – March 9, 2026

H. Elaine Parrish, 85, of Niles, Michigan died peacefully Monday, March 9, 2026 in the comfort of her family's presence. Her life began June 6, 1940 in South Bend, Indiana the middle of three children born to Thomas and Hazel Sossoman. She married Andrew Ernest Parrish April 8, 1977 in Cassopolis, Michigan. After almost forty-one years of marriage, he preceded her in death in 2018. Elaine loved the Lord Jesus Christ and was an active member of her church. Elaine enjoyed working with people and her career spanned many fields. She and Andy were amateur photographers and enjoyed traveling together. Elaine loved hosting family and friends for holidays and especially the fourth of July fireworks in Niles. Elaine will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by two sons, Larry (Jamie Fahlsing) Haines, Gary (Kimberly) Haines; a stepson, Robert (Rita) Parrish; twelve grandchildren; many great grandchildren; daughter-in-law, Hope Haines; and several nieces and nephews. In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents; one son, Carl Haines; her sister, Audrey Squires; her brother, Thomas D. Sossoman, Jr.; and her former husband Ronald Haines. Family and friends will gather at Youngs Prairie Cemetery, Quaker Street off Decatur Road, Cassopolis on Saturday, March 28 at 10:00 A.M. where Elaine will be laid to rest beside her beloved. The family would like to thank PACE of SW Michigan, Long Acres AFC of Buchanan, and West Woods of Niles for the love and compassionate care they gave mom in her later years. Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com

Thomas H. Colley

November 10, 1948 – March 14, 2026

Thomas Henry Colley, a cherished family man and respected member of his community, passed away at the age of 77 on March 14, 2026, in Dowagiac, Michigan, due to natural causes. Born on November 10, 1948, in South Bend, Indiana, Thomas was the beloved son of the late Thomas H. and Betty (Kohler) Colley. His life was a testament to the values of kindness, handiness, and friendliness, which he embodied in every interaction.

In 1973, Thomas united in marriage with his loving wife, Donna Stanton, who preceded him in death. The legacy of their love continues through his children, Thomas (Carrie) Colley, Kelly (Sean) Mahon, Travis (Sunny) Colley, and Matthew (Jeannie) Colley. He was a doting grandfather to fifteen grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren, each of whom brought him immense joy and pride. Thomas's life was further enriched by his siblings, Bryon (Lynn) Colley, Mark (Carla) Colley, Linda Carpenter, Kawanna (Larry) Stoker, and Jackie (Jim) Lawrence, all of whom shared in the journey of his life's story. Thomas's work ethic was as strong as his character. He spent many years in manufacturing, where his dedication and skill were evident to all who worked alongside him. In his later years, he found great satisfaction in working with his sons, passing on his knowledge and witnessing their growth both personally and professionally. A man of faith, Thomas lived his Christian beliefs through his actions, offering help and hospitality to anyone in need. An avid outdoorsman, Thomas relished the time he spent in nature. Whether he was hunting, fishing, trapping, or mushroom hunting, he was in his element. His love for bowling and organizing family fish fry events brought him and his loved ones together, creating memories that will continue to warm their hearts.

Memorial contributions may be made in his memory to Hidden Acres 50582 Pleasant St, Dowagiac, Michigan 49047. A memorial service will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 11:00am at First Baptist Church, 604 E 3rd Street, Lawton, Michigan. A private interment will be held at Mission Hills Memorial Gardens. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

Death notices

Jerry Ray Hurlbutt, 78, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on March 10, 2026. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Dr. Stephen E. Jess, 84, of Niles, passed away on March 11, 2026. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.BrownFuneral HomeNiles.com.

Betty Jean Gillhouse, 78, passed away on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, in Niles, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Ricky L. Krueger, 68, of Niles, passed away in Mishawaka on Friday, March 13, 2026. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.BrownFuneral HomeNiles.com.

Lefoy "Lee" Anderson, 84, of Dowagiac, passed away on March 12, 2026. Funeral Service will be Friday, March 27, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. at Brown Funeral Home with visitation beginning at 12:00 p.m. Arrangements by Brown Funeral Home. www.Brown FuneralHomeNiles.com

James Green, 85, of Niles, passed away March 15, 2026. Funeral services will be Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at Brown Funeral Home at 1pm with visitation beginning at Noon. Arrangements by Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.BrownFuneralHome Niles.com.

Frederic R. Smith, Sr., 90, passed away on March 13, 2026 in Mishawaka. A celebration to honor Fred's life will be Saturday, March 21, 2026 at Christian Center Church at 530 E. Ireland Road, South Bend, Indiana 46614 at Noon. Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services entrusted with arrangements.

Sue Ann Mansfield, 77, passed away on Saturday, March 14, 2026, in Mishawaka, Indiana. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

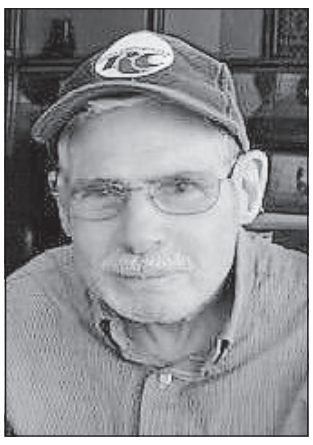
Jane Elizabeth Clevenger, 91, passed away on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, in Mishawaka, Indiana. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Timothy Wray Curtis, 68, passed away on Friday, March 13, 2026, in Niles, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Devin Bidwell, 59, of Berrien Springs, Michigan, passed away on March 17, 2026 in Berrien Springs. Arrangements have been entrusted to Allred Funeral Home in Berrien Springs. Services to be held on March 23, 2026 at the Stevensville Seventh-day Adventist Church. www.AllredFuneral Home.com.

Dr. Stephen E. Jess

October 20, 1941 – March 11, 2026



Dr. Stephen E. Jess, a beacon of wisdom and kindness, passed away peacefully from natural causes on March 11, 2026, in Mishawaka, Indiana. Born on October 20, 1941, in Green Bay, Wisconsin, he was the beloved son of the late Harvey and Agnes (Engels) Jess.

Stephen's life was one of dedication, not only to his family but also to the countless students he guided throughout his career. Stephen's journey with his cherished wife, Deborah Brumitt Jess, began on a joyful note as they exchanged vows in Niles, Michigan, on December 29, 2001. Their love and companionship remained steadfast through the years, and she continues to honor his memory.

His legacy flourishes through his four children: Stephen (Catherine) Jess of Crosby, Texas, Kristin Jess-Seely (Jeff) of Temple, Texas, Kurt (Laurie) Jess of Bloomington, Minnesota, and Joanie Jess-Zakoor of Elkhart, Indiana, as well as his many step-children. Stephen's joy was multiplied with the birth of each of his seven grandchildren: Gavin, Alycia, Jessika, Rebekah, Kyla, Hannah, Kephren and his great-grandson, Stephen, who will miss their beloved patriarch deeply.

His sister, Karen (Robert) Cassidy of Kingwood, Texas, remembers him fondly, cherishing the memories they shared. A man of profound intellect and insight, Dr. Jess earned his PhD. in Education, which laid the foundation for a distinguished career. For forty-four years, he served as a Professor of Social Science and History at Southwestern Michigan College, where his passion for teaching and his commitment to his students' success left an indelible mark. His wisdom and intelligence made him a respected figure among peers and pupils alike.

Beyond the walls of academia, Stephen was an avid coin collector, a hobby that reflected his appreciation for history and the stories embedded within each piece. He found solace in the serenity of fishing, the camaraderie of golfing, and the connections fostered through social media, where he kept up with family and friends. Stephen was a true educator at heart, one who loved to share knowledge and inspire curiosity in all areas of life.

Memorial contributions may be made in Dr. Jess' memory to Center for Hospice Care 501 Comfort Place, Mishawaka, Indiana 46545. In keeping with his wishes, cremation has taken place and a luncheon to celebrate his life will be held at the Niles F.O.P. at 531 N. State Street, Niles, Michigan 49120 on Monday, March 16, 2026 at 1:00pm. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.Brown FuneralHomeNiles.com.

As we bid farewell to Dr. Stephen E. Jess, we celebrate a life lived with purpose and love. His memory will be cherished and kept alive in the stories we share, the lessons he taught us, and the indomitable spirit he leaves behind.

Danielle 'Dani' Kirtdoll

March 20, 1984 – March 15, 2026

Danielle "Dani" Kristen Kirtdoll, 41, of South Bend, Indiana, died peacefully on Sunday, March 15, 2026. Danielle came into this world on March 20, 1984, in Niles, Michigan, the first born of Warren Watson and Tracey Toney. She married Chris Kirtdoll on January 29, 2010, in Cassopolis, Michigan.

Danielle was a devoted and loving wife and mother, and she cherished every moment spent with her husband, children, and stepchildren. She was an adored daughter, sister, friend, aunt, and cousin. Aunt Danielle never missed one of her niece Sofia's dance recitals. She was overjoyed by the recent birth of her youngest nephew, Warren Watson, III.

Danielle was known for her beautiful long brown hair, and her favorite color was baby blue. She was wonderfully creative and artistic. She enjoyed listening to music, shopping, and she was a thoughtful gift-giver. Her nieces and nephews always looked forward to Aunt Danielle surprising them with candy and sweets.

Danielle loved her two cats and her dog. She was selfless and had a heart of gold. She was always thinking about others, and she would go out of her way to help anyone who needed it. Danielle will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

She is survived by her husband of sixteen years, Chris Kirtdoll of South Bend, Indiana; two sons, Bailey Castillo of Clearwater, Florida, and Austin Castillo of South Bend; her daughter, Isabella Castillo of South Bend; stepson, Christopher Kirtdoll, Jr., of South Bend; her stepdaughter, Saniah Woods of South Bend; her mother, Tracey Toney of Niles; her father and stepmother, Warren & Darlene Watson of Niles; brothers, Anthony (Chelsea) Tracey of Niles, Warren (Lyndsey) Watson, Jr., of Royal Oak, Michigan, & Wesley Watson of East Lansing, Michigan; sister-in-laws, Nikki Kirtdoll & Ashley James of Niles; special niece Zhaneah, and a host of nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, Warren & Ruth Watson and Franklin & Betty Toney; father-in-law James Berry; mother-in-law, Debra Kirtdoll Flemming; sister-in-law, Knenah Kirtdoll; her cousin, Abigail Watson; one uncle, William "Bill" Watson; and two aunts, Christine Cosey and Josephine Kirtdoll.

Family and friends will gather for visitation on Friday, March 20, 2026 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Halbritter Wickens Funeral Home, 615 East Main Street, Niles, Michigan, to grieve the loss of her beautiful soul here on earth, and to share precious memories of Danielle. Funeral services will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Halbritter Wickens Funeral Home.

Danielle will be laid to rest in Silverbrook Cemetery. Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online at halbritter wickens.com.

See more obituaries on page A4

Obituary policy

Leader Publications publishes death notices at a cost of $15.
Extended obituaries are priced based on character count.
If there's an error because of a mistake made by the newspaper, the obituary will be reprinted at no charge.
For more information, or to submit an obituary, email obits@leaderpub.com.

OBITUARIES

Jane Clevenger

June 29, 1934 – March 17, 2026

Jane Elizabeth Clevenger, 91, passed away peacefully on March 17, 2026, in Mishawaka, Indiana. Born to Clark and Stella (Colegrove) Rhodes on June 29, 1934, in Niles, Michigan, Jane's life was a testament of dedication to family, friends, and the many lives she touched.

A 1952 graduate of Niles High School, Jane worked as a beautician for many years, a career where her artistry and warmth brought joy and comfort to countless individuals. She also worked in the factory at National Standard, which is where she would go on to meet her late husband, Edward Clevenger. She went on to work with Niles Community School Systems from which she retired, leaving behind a legacy of commitment and care.

Throughout her life, Jane was a devout member of Hope Community Church, where her unwavering faith and service were a testament to her loving heart and spirit. Family was the cornerstone of Jane's life. With the passing of her parents, Clark and Stella Rhodes, her loving husband Edward Clevenger, her dear brother William Rhodes, her sister Rosemary Barnes, and her great-grandson Cody Caraway, Jane's resilience and strength were evident.

She was the loving mother to her children, Paul (Vivian) Shrider III, Tracy (Clark) Baugher, Ronald (Wanda) Clevenger, Cindy Caraway, and Lisa (Joe) Emmons. The legacy of Jane's love and wisdom lives on through her eleven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, who have been imbued with her courage, grace, and kindheartedness.

Among her fondest pastimes were her stitch club gatherings, playing card games that sparked joy and competitiveness, losing herself in the pages of a good book, and savoring the moments spent at family cookouts and fish fry's. These occasions were cherished by Jane and those who knew her and will be fondly remembered as celebrations of life and laughter.

Services for Jane, led by Pastor Mike Smith, will be held at Brown Funeral Home on Monday, March

23, at 2:00pm, with the family receiving guests beginning at 12:00pm. Memorial contributions in Jane's name may be made to Hope Community Church and The Berrien County Animal Control. Jane Elizabeth Clevenger's memory will forever be cherished and honored by all who were fortunate enough to walk a while alongside her on her journey.

The heavens have indeed received an extraordinary soul who will be remembered as much for her tenacity and resilience as for her unwavering love and kindness.

Lucia Hendershott

May 10, 1931 – March 11, 2026

Lucia (Brothers) Hendershott, 94, of Niles, died peacefully Wednesday, March 11,2026 in the comfort of her family's presence. Her life began May 10, 1931 in Niles, Michigan, the fifth of six children born to Edward and Cecelia Brothers. Lucia Brothers attended Niles High School until 1948 when she married Ralph W. Hendershott November 13, in Saint Joseph Michigan.

She had several careers, she was a waitress, cook for Associates Lodge and worked as a lab technician for the USDA in Niles. Lucia had special times traveling with her mother and daughter to Ireland, Hawaii and Las Vegas. She particularly enjoyed Siegfried and Roy and Liberace.

Lucia had fun visiting casinos, playing lottery and bingo. She could often be found putting together puzzles with her last puzzle being just this last summer. Lucia kept track of her out of state family and friends by writing letters. She especially loved spending time with her family.

Lucia will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by one son, Ralph W. (Suzette) Hendershott jr. of Buchanan; two grandchildren, Levi (Monica) Hendershott of Portage, Carisa (Randy) Simpson of Niles; three great grandchildren, Ginger Hendershott, Devon Simpson, Esme Simpson and a host of nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband of sixty-eight years, Ralph W. Hendershott, daughter, Janet Hendershott, two brothers and three sisters.

Family and friends will gather Monday, March 16, 2026 10:00 A.M. until the time of her Mass at 11:00 A.M in St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church, 219 South State Street, Niles. Lucia will be laid to rest next to her beloved husband and daughter, in Silverbrook Cemetery. The family prefers contributions in memory of Lucia be made to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception and St. Jude 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, Tennessee 38105.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

More obituaries on page A3

Obituary policy

Leader Publications publishes death notices at a cost of $15. Extended obituaries are priced based on character count.

If there's an error because of a mistake made by the newspaper, the obituary will be reprinted at no charge.

For more information, or to submit an obituary, email obits@leaderpub.com.

LAWN CARE

From page A1

ribbon-cutting ceremony, Soenen and the chamber used a ribbon tying ceremony to signify the businesses and the community coming together as one.

"It means a lot," said owner Brenton Harrell of the community turnout. "I didn't know that we had such a supportive community. I didn't know that so many people in the community recognized and supported us the way that they do. This new location is going to allow us to better serve our community with more prompt response times. I think, overall, it will mean better service for the community."

For more than five years, Harrell and his team have been providing southwest Michigan with a variety of tree and lawn care services including tree removal, trimming, stump removal, mowing, trimming, blowing and more. The company also sells outdoor and indoor firewood, camp firewood and premium cooking wood.

Harrell said his primary service areas are South Bend, Berrien Springs, Niles, Cassopolis and Dowagiac.

"In Southwest Michigan, we get to see great views and meet a lot of different groups of people and business owners," he said. "Doing lawn terrain and tree care, you can't go a full week without working by the waterways. There are different towns, different communities, and a different environment every day."

While his business does have a Niles location, Harrell wanted to establish roots in the Dowagiac community, an area his business has invested heavily in over the years. Affordable Lawn Care Solutions was awarded a five-year lawn maintenance service contract with the City of Dowagiac in December 2025.

"It means a lot. I didn't know that we had such a supportive community. I didn't know that so many people in the community recognized and supported us the way that they do. This new location is going to allow us to better serve our community with more prompt response times. I think, overall, it will mean better service for the community."

BRENTON HARRELL
Owner

"The more I started meeting people in Dowagiac, the more they began to welcome me into the community," he said. "Within just a couple of years of meeting my first person from Dowagiac, I already felt like I was meant to be here – like I belong in the community of Dowagiac.

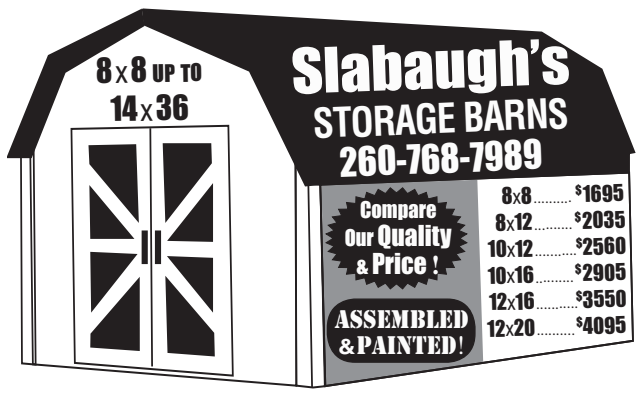
For Harrell, the ability to solve new challenges and meet different people keep him engaged and motivated.

"I enjoy every day being different," he said. "Every time you use a chainsaw, you're using it in a different aspect. Every time you cut grass, you're going to find different terrain. Every time you go out and about, you're going to meet different people. You get to be out in the community instead of in a building all day. It's just something new and different every day, but with a good steady constant as well. It's the best of both worlds."

While a Niles native himself, Harrell has enjoyed expanding his business into the greater Dowagiac area.

"We're six or eight years into doing some work for the city and for the residents in the area and I am really enjoying everything Dowagiac has to offer," he said. "Dowagiac has all of the bigger town commodities along with small-town values, so it's been great. I look forward to serving this community more through the years and hopefully getting to know everybody at some point."

For more information, visit affordablelawncaresolutions.com or Affordable Lawn Care Solutions by phone at (269) 663-9137 or by email at alcs.team1@gmail.com.



MERGER

From page A1

happen if we have someone to hold our hand as we go along."

Questions came in a number of areas at Tuesday's meeting. Ambulance staff in attendance were concerned about staffing and duties, while government leaders wondered about response times and funding. More than one local leader asked if the services could partner without a full merger.

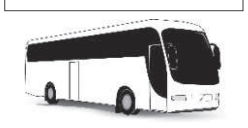
"We are in a time when our people need to realize that the service has a need that has to be filled whether that's a merger or a partnership," Howard Township Supervisor and SMCAS Board Chairman Bill Kasprzak said. "If we don't work together, we won't have a service at all."

Find us online at leaderpub.com

Lunch & A Show

April 1 – Pretty Woman the Musical
April 8 – Father of the Bride
May 21 – Singin' in the Rain
June 17 – Run For Your Wife
July 22 – Escape to Margaritaville

Call today for more information.



SIGNAL TRAVEL & TOURS, INC.

Give us a call or see our website for more information.
269-684-2880 ♦ 1-800-811-1528 ♦ www.signaltravel.com

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
VILLAGE OF VANDALIA

PROPOSED BUDGET, TRUTH IN TAXATION HEARING, AND MILLAGE RATE PROPOSAL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Village Council of the Village of Vandalia, Cass County, Michigan, will hold a Public Hearing on the proposed Village Budget for the fiscal year February 2026 through February 2027, including a Truth in Taxation Hearing regarding the proposed property tax millage rate to support the proposed budget.

The public hearing will be held on:

Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Village of Vandalia Hall

18035 State Street

Vandalia, Michigan 49095

The purpose of this hearing is to provide an opportunity for citizens of the Village of Vandalia to review and comment on the proposed Village Budget for the fiscal year February 2026 through February 2027 and to discuss the proposed property tax millage rate necessary to support that budget.

THE PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE RATE PROPOSED TO BE LEVIED TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSED BUDGET WILL BE A SUBJECT OF THIS HEARING.

A copy of the proposed Village Budget for the fiscal year February 2026 through February 2027 is available for public inspection during regular business hours at the Village of Vandalia Hall, 18035 State Street, Vandalia, Michigan 49095.

Written comments may also be submitted to the Village Clerk prior to the hearing.

The Village Council encourages residents and taxpayers to attend this hearing and provide input regarding the proposed budget and millage rate for the upcoming fiscal year.

Village of Vandalia

By Order of the Village Council

Village Clerk

NOW HIRING
SNYDER'S POOL & SPA
Niles & Cassopolis

Full Time:
- Assistant Store Manager
- Service Tech
- Tech Assistant
- Retail Clerk

Part Time:
- Retail Clerk & Accounts Payable

Call: 269-684-8792
EMAIL RESUME: poolspausa@yahoo.com

FARM AUCTION
SATURDAY - MARCH 28 AT 10:30 A.M.
Located at 3824 E. Napier Ave. - Benton Harbor, MI 49022
Just East of US-31 off Exit #24 or East of I-94 off Exit #30 or West 5 miles of M-140

16 TRACTORS: FARMTRAC-555 DTC, 4WD; FARMTRAC-555; **(2)** FARMTRAC-60; **(2)** FORD 3600; FORD 3910; FORD 4610; FORD 5900; FORD 7000; **(3)** FORD 800 Series; CASE 1190 High-Clearance Spray Tractor; ZETOR 5211. **DUMP TRUCK * FORKLIFT:** 1980 Ford F-700 w/Twin Hoist, 73,594 Miles; HYSTER Diesel Forklift w/3 Stage Mast & Roll-Over. **PRODUCE PACKING EQUIPMENT:** MAF Single Lane Opti-Scan Computerized Grading Line; LAKEWOOD 48" Stainless Steel Lift Sizer; Stainless Steel Dump Tank; Stainless Steel 36" Vegetable Washer; Phil Brown Double Pallet Elevator, Inground. **FARM RELATED EQUIPMENT:** Thomas Bros. 500 Gal. 6-Row Vegetable Sprayer; **(2)** Model 1600 Water Wheel Planters; Row Guard Double Sand Filter; **(40)** Shop Made Vegetable Carts; Used Cherry Tanks; 3-Point Reel Handler; 4 Rolls of Drip Pipe; Laydown Pipe; Gorman-Rupp PTO Pumper; **(2)** Single 275 Gal. Fuel Tanks; Single Axle Farm Trailer; MF 3 Bottom Plow; 5 Row Spring Plow; Few Small Items; Café Table; Picnic Table; Kwik-Lok Bag Ties; Thermal Transfer Paper; Delfield S.S. Commercial Refrigerated/Dry Display Showcase.

INSPECTION/PRE-VIEW FRIDAY
MARCH 27 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Owner: George McManus-III (L.H. Piggott & Girls)
GLASSMAN AUCTION SERVICE
glassmanauctions.com or auctionzip.com or gotoauction.com
John Glassman (269) 757-3315

Stone Lake Manor Apartments is now accepting applicatons for 1 & 2 bedroom apartment homes. We are located at 145 Stone Lake St, just off W State St or Pokagon Hwy in Cassopolis. Please call 269-445-3333. For hearing impaired, please call TTY 7-1-1. Applicants must be 62 or older and/or physically disabled. Rent based on income for those who qualify. Professionally managed by Medallion Management, Inc. www.medallionmgmt.com This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Did You Know...

Using protective devices like alarm systems, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and dead bolt locks could get you a discount on homeowner's insurance?

Call today to find out more!
(269) 683-4900

Business • Home
Auto • Life • Farm

IMS Insurance Management Service
Auto-Owners Insurance — Life • Home • Car • Business

214 N. 4th St., Niles
www.imsinsuranceagency.com
(269) 683-4900

STUDENTS

From page A1

Photo provided

From left: Erika Mitchell, Grace Schultz, Calvin Mitchell, Luke Critzer, Emily Henry, Alyx Halcomb. Not pictured: Dylan Shepardson.

was in complete shock when she showed up for the first Youth in Government meeting. She stayed all year and traveled to Lansing with sixteen other students. She stood out there as the only junior legislator and had to separate herself from the rest of the group to argue for her bill to get passed. Because she stood out as such a leader, she has been nominated to be one of our delegation leaders next year."

Henry is also a leader on the softball field.

"Emily has been a leader this off-season for the varsity softball team," said softball coach Mike Behnke. "She has been fully committed, missing only one off-season workout – and that was to attend Youth in Government in Lansing. [Athletic Director Brent Nate] has a saying: 'Are you interested, or are you invested?' Emily has been very invested in softball this year, working hard on her skills and improving significantly. I look forward to seeing those improvements as the season starts in the coming weeks."

In addition to softball, Henry plays volleyball and participates in the National Honor Society, Rotary Interact, and Student Senate. Despite her busy schedule, she maintains a 3.9 GPA. She plans to attend St. Mary's College to pursue a career in nursing.

Shepardson is an eighth grader at Dowagiac Middle School and the daughter of Michael Kidder and Leah Herron. At home, Dylan has a dog named Willow, a cat named Winnie and several chickens. Shepardson loves music, hanging out with friends and playing the clarinet for the DMS band. When asked what she likes most about Dowagiac Middle School, Dylan said she loves the teachers and the social aspect of middle school.

Dylan was nominated by Andrea Cline, who teaches art at DMS. She appreciates how Shepardson encourages and motivates others to do their best.

"I nominated Dylan for Student of the Month because she exemplifies the qualities we look for when selecting someone to represent our building," Cline said. "Dylan has consistently been a model student in art; she takes responsibility for her grades and holds herself accountable to maintain high marks. Dylan demonstrates leadership in class through her active participation, thoughtful questions, positive attitude, and ability to complete projects ahead of schedule. She is highly involved in our Fine Arts programs – participating in choir, band, and art – showing her true dedication and passion for the arts."

Halcomb is a kindergartener at Patrick Hamilton and was chosen as Student of the Month for her continuous growth. She is the daughter of Victor Halcomb and Taylor Heffington and she is "a proud big sister" to Lily. Halcomb is focused on learning and consistently making the right choices. She was described as a kind friend to her classmates and a wonderful classroom helper.

Holcomb said her favorite things about school are snack time and art. When she is at home, she loves to play outside, especially playing soccer with her friends. When she grows up, she would like to be both an Olympic ice skater and a fifth-grade teacher.

Schultz is the daughter of Colin and Cassidy Schultz. She has a two-year-old brother, Micah, and helps take care of her family's 22 chickens.

Schultz was described as an exceptional student who consistently excels in the classroom. She recently scored in the 93rd percentile for reading and the 95th percentile for math. The achievement reflects increases of 22 points from the beginning of the year and an increase of 50 points on the tests.

Her favorite school activity is writing, especially when she has the freedom to write about her family and the time they spend together.

Schultz's kindergarten teacher Nan Roach said that she is a perfect example of what it means to be a Justice Gage Hero.

"She is honest, respectful, and kind to everyone she interacts with," Roach said. "Always ready with a smile and a friendly greeting, Grace is a dedicated "rule follower" who encourages her peers to do the same. She is highly responsible, ensuring her work is done correctly and often bringing in extra practice she has completed at home. Beyond her own tasks, she is always looking for ways to help, proactively picking up messes and keeping the classroom organized."

At home, Schultz's favorite thing to do is play with her little brother. Her favorite colors are yellow and purple, and wants to be a chiropractor when she grows up.

Miller is a kindergartener at Kincheloe and is the daughter of Cheyenne Miller and the granddaughter of Sheila and Paul Miller. At home, Miller lives in a very active household with four dogs, five cats and many fish and chickens.

Miller was chosen by teacher Monica Fisher as Student of the Month because she represents what it means to be a true Kinchloe Hero.

"She arrives every day with a smile and is a dedicated helper and friend to everyone in the classroom," Fisher said. "Erica is consistently willing to participate, frequently raising her hand during class discussions to share her knowledge. She truly cares about the well-being of her classmates and is always happy to share."

Miller's favorite part of kindergarten is storytime. In art class, her favorite activity is painting. In gym class, she loves playing Duck, Duck, Goose with her peers. When she grows up, Miller aspires to be a doctor so that she can help people.

"She already demonstrates the compassionate qualities that will surely make her a wonderful physician one day," Fisher said.

Critzer is a six-year-old kindergartner at Sister Lakes. He is the son of Daniel and Megan Critzer and has a younger sister, Lila. Kreitzer enjoys spending time outside in the fresh air with his dog and enjoys playing with Pokémon cards. In school, his favorite subject is making new friends and his favorite food is shrimp. When he grows up, Luke aspires to be a scientist.

His teacher, Heather Liebetrau, selected Kreitzer as Student of the Month "because he is a responsible, helpful, and hardworking student who always gives his best effort."

"He is known for being exceptionally kind and considerate, frequently finding ways to encourage his peers," said Principal Alicia Stout. "With his loving nature and dedication to his studies, Luke has proven to his teacher and to Sister Lakes Elementary that he is a true Chieftain Hero."

BOARD

From page A1

objective data backing these promises so we can move forward with confidence. I look forward to observing how these challenges are addressed in the coming months."

Blomgren spoke about the transition to GLCs during Monday's meeting, stating that the district completed its forums at all elementary buildings, which provided the district with opportunities to speak with staff, parents and community members. He said that transportation to and from the buildings next year remains an ongoing evolution and a work in progress, with another meeting scheduled with the transportation department on Monday.

Blomgren added that the Elementary Advisory Committee met with teachers and staff Monday, with the discussion centering around the district's "Young 5s" program.

"We have more work to do alongside surrounding districts and Principal Alicia Stout, our newly named K-1 building leader, to develop what that program will look like," he said.

Regarding the planned Early Childhood Center to be located at Patrick Hamilton, Blomgren said the district is continuing its collaboration with the Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District regarding the transition of Patrick Hamilton into the Early Childhood Center and is finalizing plans for its Great Start Readiness Program and Strong Beginnings classrooms.

He added that the district is working with the ISD and state licensure to explore opportunities for a daycare program.

"We recently met with Flowers Early Learning, who toured our facility," Blomgren said. "They are interested in starting a partnership with us and would like to commit to at least one classroom within the Early Childhood Center next year. We will continue to work with them to determine the specific age group and build that relationship."

In other business, the district invited members of the local nonprofit St. Francis Outreach to the stage to thank them for their dedication to the district. Founded in 2015 by parishioners from Holy Maternity of Mary Church and Sacred Heart of Mary Church, along with volunteer members of the community, SFO aims to improve the lives of individuals and families in the Dowagiac community through outreach services providing free food and clothing. The organization work closely with local elementary schools on an as-needed basis for emergency clothing needs, released Beacon Health patients, a food pantry twice a month, Easter and Thanksgiving holiday food boxes and assists with the Feeding America food truck four times a year.

The program currently provides weekend healthy and nutritional food to 192 Dowagiac students. The food bags are delivered starting the first Friday in October and continue for 32 school weeks each year. The nonprofit collaborates and works very closely with counselors and secretaries from all of the school buildings, including Pathfinders, to provide winter clothing and other clothing necessities for many Dowagiac students.

"Dowagiac Union Schools is grateful for this partnership, and we truly hope that this lasts forever," said Justus Gage Elementary Principal Brian Henry. "Part of their mission is to improve the lives of families and individuals in our community by offering service and goods at no cost. We truly appreciate and are grateful for your time and effort over the past nine school years."

The board also approved the retirement of teacher Mike Behnke, approved FMLA leave for teachers and staff, accepted the resignation of Kaisey Bulifant and approved the temporary hiring of Katrina Hargreaves-Keenan as a long-term substitute teacher.

Wagner FAMILY FUNERALS
burials • cremations
Only you can understand your loss...
...we care enough to try.
Connelly Chapel
Cassopolis
269.445.2435
Pobocik Chapel
Three Oaks
269.756.3831
wagnercares.com

Caring for a loved one?
You don't have to do it alone.
At Area Agency on Aging, we're your trusted source for answers and assistance. From in-home care options to respite services and critical resources, we make it easier to balance work, family, and caregiving.
Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
SPECIALISTS IN AGING
Offering Choices for Independent Lives
Call 1-800-654-2810 or
visit www.AreaAgencyonAging.org

Buchanan Area Senior Center
Add Well-Being to Your Life at the BASC!
• Fully Equipped Fitness Room
• Field Trips & Walk Days
• Knitting, Crocheting & Quilting
• Educational Programming
• Cards & Games
• Several Medical Checks
• Book Club & Garden Club
• Movies & More
Physical & Social Activities Keep the Body, Mind and Soul Healthier.
We welcome all older adults (55+) from Berrien County.
basc BUCHANAN AREA SENIOR CENTER
810 Rynearson St. • Buchanan, MI 49107 269-695-7119 • thebasc.org

Strong Partnerships. Precise Architecture. Signature Designs.
CARMI design group inc
www.CARMI.biz

DO YOU HAVE A PROJECT?
WE DO IT ALL!
Additions, Remodels, Barns, New Builds, Decks, Concrete.
(Patios, Driveways, Sidewalks, Foundations, Floors, Decorative)
Principle Construction Services LLC
Licensed & Insured
"Quality Is Our Principle"
principleconst.services@gmail.com
(616) 312-8189

HEY FRIENDS!
Do you need help with your hearing health care?
WE'RE HERE FOR YOU
Special Savings
FREE hearing screening and FREE clean & check of your current hearing devices
Professional Hearing Services
511 Renaissance Drive, St. Joseph, MI 49085
www.prohear.net (269) 982-3444

Health Is Wealth Fair set for March 26

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — Local and state organizations are teaming up to provide free health and wellness support to the community.

Everyday Life Consulting, Hope Community Church and the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services are gearing up to present the Health Is Wealth Fair next week.

The fair will take place from 1 to 6 p.m. Thursday, March 26 at Hope Community Church, 2390 Lake St., Niles. Attendees are encouraged to come early for a chance to enter to win various prizes. The free event aims to provide the community with essential wellness tools for families and individuals. No registration required to attend.

"This fair is about getting people excited about being invested in their own health, understanding how they can better manage it and giving them resources to do that," said Community Health Worker KC Johnson.

Visitors can participate in a wide variety of interactive outreach services, including Live Zumba sessions and live juicing demonstrations. There will also be nutrition services featuring healthy, diabetic-friendly food demonstrations. Additionally, the fair will host career services to support local professional growth and community development.

"We're doing a juicing demo to show people how to juice. There are a lot of fun giveaways; people like to get free stuff. That's just to make it fun," Johnson said. "We're going to have Zumba going on; it's going to be fun."

The fair will also offer free health screenings and information. Medical professionals and experts will be on-site to provide screenings for blood pressure, diabetes (A1C), and cholesterol. Information and resources will also be available covering mental and behavioral health, women's and men's health, weight management and vaccinations.

"Social well-being and nutritional health – we'll have everything that hits those topics," Johnson said. "We have folks coming from Corewell to do a nutritional demo, teaching diabetics how to make and create diabetic-friendly meals. The Berrien County Health Department will be here with their parenting program and talking about some of their other programs. We have folks from Nora Mental Health, Area Agency on Aging – just from A to Z, all kinds of social services, physical health, and mental health."

Johnson has enjoyed her role in putting the fair together and hopes the community will take advantage of it.

"Just getting everybody together has been exciting," she said. "As I've been working with everyone to do this, I've been making connections with different partners in the community to pull it all together in one space. We don't have a hub where we can get all-inclusive information and just come together for one thing. I think we need it. It's evident because the community showed up when I put out the call. Everybody said, 'Yeah.' I don't think anybody we reached out to said they couldn't do it. That just goes to show that we needed it."

Wellness center offers free preventive health services for area residents

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A local neighborhood wellness center continues to provide community members with preventative health care and referral services at no cost.

The neighborhood wellness center located at Hope Community Church, 2390 Lake St., Niles, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays and from noon to 7 p.m. on Fridays. Sponsored by a collaboration between the Wayne State University Community Health Worker Academy and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the center offers a variety of services including blood pressure screenings, cholesterol screenings, diabetes screenings and COVID-19 and flu testing. No ID, insurance or appointments are required.

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

The neighborhood wellness center located at Hope Community Church, 2390 Lake St., Niles, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays and from noon to 7 p.m. on Fridays.

"These are the type of labs that we do," Said Site Lead Sara Palmer. "We don't take a big sample; it's just a finger poke. If you need weekly blood pressure monitoring – like your doctor says you should be managing blood pressure, but you don't want to go to Walgreens because the line's long or the machine fails – get it done here for free. We're not gonna tell you no; come every day."

In addition to the screenings, a community health worker is on site to offer in-person support by referring community members to resources that cater to their health and well-being.

"We work together," said Community Health Worker KC Johnson. "They do the testing, and then if people need social service type things, I can help fill in the gaps with understanding healthcare or applying for Medicaid. Sometimes seniors come in and need help understanding Medicare, knowing when to get on it, and how to work all those kinds of things. I have people come in that might need help finding housing or food assistance, so I get them connected with different resources in the community. Sometimes, people just need to talk. I have people that come in on a regular basis that don't understand letters from MDHHS; I can help decode that stuff and help upload documents. I have people come in that need help with getting a new roof. I'll help them with applications for the City of Niles, so it can really be any kind of need. I just dig out all kinds of resources for folks."

Both Palmer and Johnson hope that more people take advantage of the services the neighborhood wellness service provides.

"It's a big deal because everybody that comes and finds out about us gets services that help them in a great way," Johnson said. "Whether people need to get signed up for benefits or need help getting their bills paid and don't know how to find resources on their own, just knowing there's a place they can come to helps them. I'm not saying it's life-changing, but it actually really is. There's a gentleman that comes – he's a repeat visitor because he knows he can come here and get help. Without knowing how to navigate resources on their own, people can just feel stuck.

"We had a guy come in here whose blood pressure was so high that they had to send him to the hospital," Johnson continued. "From coming in here and seeing how high it was – he could have stroked out – he ended up changing his whole regimen. He changed his diet, started eating healthier, and managing his weight. Those are the kind of impacts being made here. People need to know we're here."

"We don't need anything but you; you're the important part," Palmer added. "A lot of people feel inferior because they think, 'Well, I have insurance. It's not for me, it's for lower income.' No, this is for everybody. Anybody who feels a part of our community, come."

Bosch Underwrites SMC's June STEM Camp

By JOHN EBY
Southwestern Michigan College

DOWAGIAC — Southwestern Michigan College has been awarded a Bosch Community Fund grant for the eighth Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Summer Camp the third week of June on the Dowagiac campus.

This grant underwrites a two-day STEM summer camp for 120 upper elementary students (grades 4-6).

The camp will collaborate with local schools and SMC, with area teachers and college faculty designing and delivering the curriculum.

High school and college students serve as camp counselors and mentors, providing younger students with hands-on STEM experiences.

The camp aims to spark students' interest in STEM subjects and expose them to a college learning environment, ultimately inspiring them to pursue STEM education and careers.

Math and Physics Professor Andrew Dohm writes the grants.

"It's a great age to tap into because of their excitement," Dohm said. "Their generosity has made it possible for us to offer a STEM Summer Camp to students in our community – an opportunity that has been truly transformative for countless young minds."

"Thanks to their support, we have been able to inspire curiosity and ignite a passion for STEM in students who might not otherwise have access to such enriching experiences," Dohm, a mechanical engineer, said. "Each year, the camp has provided hands-on learning opportunities and the chance for students to envision themselves as the future engineers, scientists and problem-solvers of our world. We deeply value the partnership we have built with the Bosch Community Fund and look forward to continuing this collaboration to inspire and empower the next generation."

Last summer, 164 campers landed rovers on Mars, coded with artificial intelligence (AI), populated a math-based zoo to learn fractions and tested pH levels.

Hands-on activities stress problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, creativity and collaborative teamwork.

Campers came from Edwardsburg, Cassopolis, Dowagiac, Marcellus, Decatur, Niles, Brandywine, Hartford, Mattawan, Berrien Springs, Coloma, Watervliet, Buchanan, Lakeshore, Eau Claire, Lawton, Paw Paw, Three Rivers and homeschooled students.

"Our group was over 50-percent girls," Dohm said, "which is the first time that has happened."

SMC's grant is one of six, along with St. Joseph Public Schools, Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Southwest Michigan, Berrien RESA, Lighthouse Education Center and Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library.

Bosch Community Fund's strategic investments in STEM education will benefit more than 13,260 students, teachers and community members.

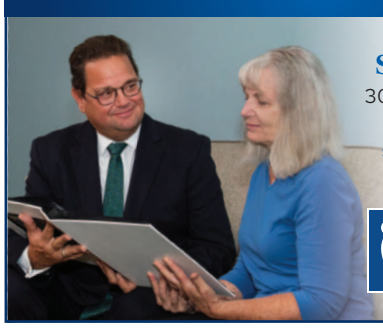
There will be a website available for sign-up at the end of May.

Southwestern Michigan College has been awarded a Bosch Community Fund grant for the eighth Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Summer Camp the third week of June on the Dowagiac campus.

Photo provided

Find us online at leaderpub.com

Celebrate a life
SWEM CHAPEL
301 W Front St, Buchanan
269-471-2700
starksfamilyfh.com
Starks Family Funeral Homes & Cremation Services



Celebrate a life
CLARK CHAPEL
405 Center St, Dowagiac
269-471-2700
starksfamilyfh.com
Starks Family Funeral Homes & Cremation Services

Family is Why WE DO IT ALL
Call or visit for all of your insurance needs.
Office Hours:
Monday: 9 am to 6 pm
Tuesday & Thursday: 9 am to 5 pm
Wednesday & Friday: 9 am to 5 pm
Saturday by Appointment
LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR STATE FARM IS THERE®
Lorie Bowers, Agent
68935 Gateway Dr.
PO Box 623
Edwardsburg, MI
49112-0623
Bus: 269-663-7015
www.LorieBowers.com
StateFarm.com® • State Farm Insurance Companies
Home Offices: Bloomington, Illinois

PIPESTONE SMALL ENGINE
We now carry FERRIS®
Mowers, Chainsaws, Power Equipment
Engines, Parts, Service, Tractors
Husqvarna
ECHO Outdoor Power Equipment
• Cylinder Boring
• Machine Shop
• Engine Rebuilding
• Crankshaft Regrinding
Kohler • Tecumseh • Briggs & Stratton
Husqvarna • Tanaka • Country Clipper
4947 Park Road, Eau Claire, MI 49111 · 269-461-6421
pipestonesmallengine.net

2026 READER'S CHOICE CONTEST
BEST of the BEST
Leader Publications
MICHIANA'S FAVORITE BUSINESSES
Let's Celebrate the BEST of Michiana!
Support Local
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT
Nominate your FAVORITE local businesses for Michiana's BEST of the BEST!
Nomination Voting begins March 30
Scan here!
Nominate FOR A CHANCE TO WIN $100!
Nomination Voting Ends May 4
www.leaderpub.com/contests

Sports

Got results?
max.harden@leaderpub.com

Bobcats fall to Titans

Photos by Nick Shelton / For Leader Publications

Brandywine Head Coach Josh Hood relays instructions too Lily Gill (11) during the Division 3 state semifinal game Thursday at the Breslin Center.

Slow start hinders Brandywine in state semifinal loss to Lumen Christi

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Correspondent

EAST LANSING — Pressure defense, forcing turnovers and using its depth to wear down opponents.

That was Brandywine's recipe for girls' basketball success in the first 27 games this season.

Unfortunately, Jackson Lumen Christi was able to turn the table on top-ranked Brandywine in Thursday's Division 3 state semifinal game at the Breslin Center at Michigan State University in a 51-33 win over the Lady Bobcats.

Lumen Christi (24-3) advances to face Pewamo-Westphalia (26-2) in Saturday's 4 p.m. championship game. It will mark the Titans' first ever appearance in the finals.

Pewamo-Westphalia defeated Roscommon 44-35 in the other semifinal.

Brandywine finishes with a record of 26-2 after appearing in its third consecutive Final Four.

Lumen Christi used an intense full-court pressure to disrupt Brandywine's offensive flow and forced the Lady Bobcats into an uncharacteristic 23 turnovers on the afternoon.

"We played lights out the first 10 minutes of this game and made shots. This team is more than just two players. I thought that especially early on we won the 50/50 balls. I have all the confidence in the world in these girls," said Lumen Christi's first-year head coach Scott Stine.

Stine formerly coached at Ypsilanti Arbor Prep, which knocked Brandywine out two of the last three seasons. Stine won three out of the last four state titles while at Arbor Prep.

Brandywine's Zaya Price (4) attempts a basket while defended by Lumen Christi's Kenna Hunt (1) Thursday during Division 3 state semifinal play at the Breslin Center.

The defensive chaos the Lady Titans were able to create limited the Lady Bobcats to just 34 total shots.

Brandywine finished the day shooting 12-of-34 (35.2 percent) from the floor and 11-for-24 (45.8 percent) at the foul stripe. Lumen Christi launched twice as many shots and made 24-of-66 (36.3 percent) field-goal attempts and made 6-of-12 (50 percent) free-throw tries.

Lumen Christi's aggressive press forced Brandywine into nine turnovers in the opening quarter. The Titans raced out to a 14-0 advantage before the Lady Bobcats finally managed its first basket on a close-range jumper from Mackenna Price with 2:53 left in the first quarter. Karleigh Byrd's charity toss was the only other point Brandywine could rummage up the remainder of the period as Lumen Christi increased its lead to 18-3 entering the second quarter.

See **LOSS**, page B1

'These girls are champions'

EAST LANSING — For the third straight year, the Bobcats earned a trip to the Breslin Center for a chance to win a state title, and for the third straight year, a Scott Stine-coached team stood in their way. The Stine-led Lumen Christi Titans defeated the Bobcats Thursday night in the Division 3 state semifinals at the Breslin Center.

Maxwell Harden

Stine led Ann Arbor Prep to three state titles in four seasons before taking the Lumen Christi job during the offseason.

"I was kidding with [coach Stine] before the game; I told him I'm going to start calling him "Coach Kryptonite," Hood said. "He's a phenomenal coach. Not only does he have talent, but they play really good basketball. That's why he wins where he's at."

The first quarter set the down for the game as the Titans dialed up the pressure and forced turnovers that led to points on offense, not unlike what Brandywine had done to opponents all season long.

"I think we had to look in the mirror for a minute and realize how fast and athletic they are," Hood said. "We don't shy away from anyone; we're in the top 20 of the state for MPR every year. We try to play the Kalamazoo Centrals and the Otsegos to put these girls in tough situations, but you can't simulate walking into the Breslin Center with the big lights."

Hood said that while the slow start was disappointing, he was impressed with the way his team continued to compete. After being outscored 18-3 in the first quarter, the Bobcats were able to keep pace with the Titans the rest of the way.

"We aren't used to turning the ball over that much, especially three times in a row," he said. "We have a lot of new faces and lost seven seniors from last year's team. Although we have experience, we don't have a ton of it because of the new roster. After that slow start, I was proud that we didn't throw in the towel at halftime. We came out and battled. That's what these girls do."

Hood was proud of the way his team competed against a Lumen Christi squad led by sophomores Kenna Hunt and Lucy Wrozek, two players destined for Division 1 college rosters. While the Bobcats did their best to contain them, players like Lily Ganton and Tristin Johnson were able to take advantage offensively.

"They're tough to defend," Hood said. "My girls said, 'Let's do it,' so we tried to take the head off the snake, hoping the movement wouldn't be as good, but their movement was great even with us trying to take out [Hunt] and [Wrozek]. They're the full package. But how about the way we competed? We camped in during the second half and I'm proud of the girls."

See **HARDEN**, page B1

Roadrunners earn awards for basketball

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — Four SMC men's basketball players recently received a total of eight end-of-season awards as announced by the MCCAA and NJCAA Region XII.

Sophomore Davion Goins was named to the MCCAA Western Conference All-Defensive Team and was named Western Defensive Player of the Year. Goins also earned spots on the Western Conference First Team, All-MCCAA and NJCAA All-Region XII Team.

Sophomore Damontae May and freshman Deuce Weston earned Honorable Mentions in the Western Conference and freshman Jovohn Ratliff was named to the Western Conference Third Team.

A former Cassopolis standout, Goins averaged 17.7 points per game on 53.6 percent shooting from the field and led the team in both rebounds per game 8.3 and steals (39). He also tallied 72 assists and 16 blocks.

Ratliff was the team's leading scorer, averaging 18.7 points per game on a team-best 52.8 percent 3-point shooting and 53.9 percent shooting overall. Weston averaged 10.3 points per game on 45.7 percent shooting from the floor while ranking second on the team with 105 total assists.

May averaged 8.9 points and 4.6 rebounds per game while leading the team with 146 assists. He also ranked second on the team with 37 steals.

Photo provided

SMC's Davion Goins (2) was named MCCAA Western Conference Defensive Player of the Year.

Top-seeded Michigan rolls past Howard

By JOHN WAWROW
Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Morez Johnson Jr. had 21 points and 10 rebounds on a perfect shooting night, and No. 1 seed Michigan rode a second-half surge to a 101-81 victory over 16th-seeded Howard in the first round of the NCAA Tournament on Thursday.

Towering center Aday Mara had 19 points, seven rebounds and six assists for a Wolverines team that set the Big Ten regular-season record with 19 conference victories. Johnson shot 8 of 8 from the field as Michigan (32-3) moved within one win of matching a program record set in 2017-18.

Top-seeded teams improved to 160-2 against No. 16 seeds, with Duke outlasting Siena earlier in the day.

Duke's struggles – the Blue Devils won 72-65 after trailing by 13 points – were top of mind for the Wolverines before tipoff.

"A 16-1 game, you kind of look at them like this should be a cakewalk, but that's just really never the case," said Roddy Gayle Jr., who scored 14 points. "Every team deserves to be here, and you can't look at any team like that."

Michigan advanced to play ninth-seeded Saint Louis (29-5) on Saturday.

Cam Gillus and Bryce Harris scored 21 points each, and Cedrick Taylor had 19 points and six rebounds for Howard (24-11). The Bison were playing two days after their 86-83 win over UMBC in the First Four at Dayton, Ohio, on Tuesday – the program's first March Madness victory in six appearances.

Michigan's depth and relentless, come-from-anywhere attacking style eventually overwhelmed Howard – though it took the Wolverines a while to get rolling. Howard's 46 points in the first half were the third most by a 16 seed against a 1 seed in tournament history, and the most since Florida A&M scored 52 in a 96-76 loss to Kentucky in 2004.

"We have a lot of respect for Howard," said Wolverines coach Dusty May, before citing the book "David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants" by Malcolm Gladwell.

"David and Goliath, according to Malcolm, wasn't necessarily an upset because there was a slingshot involved. In the first half, Howard had their slingshots out," May said. "We thought we took a haymaker from them in the first half. And our guys never played scared."

After the Bison cut the lead to 50-48 on Ose Okojie's drive into the paint 14 seconds into the second half, Michigan began to pull away, eventually building a 77-59 edge on Gayle's 3-pointer 7:30 into the period.

Howard's 3-point shooting went cold. After hitting 11 of their first 17 attempts, the Bison finished 14 of 29.

Otherwise, the Bison showed little fear in the face of a daunting challenge.

"You play the game to win. We're just as talented as they are," said Harris, a fifth-year senior. "We have talent, too. I feel like we showed that in the first half for sure."

Harris then turned his attention to the Wolverines.

"Big shoutout to Michigan; they're a great team. It could have been very easy for them to – like other past teams that have been upset – to totally dismantle," he said. "Kudos to them. That's the sign of a good team."

Fans get peek at upset

Once the Wolverines opened a 20-plus-point lead, the crowd in Buffalo was more interested in watching the double-box broadcast on the scoreboard and cheering on the final minute of VCU's 82-78 win over North Carolina.

Gayle comes up big

Gayle is from nearby Niagara Falls, and the Michigan senior played with plenty of family and friends in the stands.

Jeffrey T. Barnes / AP

Michigan forward Morez Johnson Jr. (21) dunks against Howard, on Thursday in Buffalo, N.Y.

"I tried my hardest to not look in that direction. I'm focused on the game plan," the backup guard said. "But at the end of the day when you hear the crowd erupt, all the nerves and the stress just kind of lift away. You just play free."

Blakeney says goodbye

Howard coach Kenneth Blakeney was emotional as he bid farewell to Harris and Okojie, seniors who made it to March Madness three times in four seasons.

"I can't express how grateful I am for these guys. They've been unbelievable people, people that I would do anything for," Blakeney said. "I'm so proud of these guys, and I love them so much."

Michigan State slams North Dakota State

By JONAH BRONSTEIN
Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Carson Cooper matched his career high with 20 points and grabbed 10 rebounds as Michigan State routed North Dakota State 92-67 on Thursday to reach the second round of the NCAA Tournament for the 22nd time in 28 consecutive appearances under coach Tom Izzo.

Coen Carr added 17 points for the third-seeded Spartans. Freshman forward Cam Ward scored 13 points and Jaxon Kohler had 12 points and nine rebounds. Leading scorer Jeremy Fears Jr. managed only seven points, but had 11 assists, exceeding his season average of 9.2 that ranks first in the country.

Michigan State (26-7) advanced to play Louisville (24-10) in the second round Saturday after the No. 6 seed in the Midwest held on to beat South Florida 83-79. It will be the fifth March Madness matchup between the schools and first since 2015, when the Spartans beat the Cardinals in overtime to reach the Final Four.

The Spartans bounced back after losing in the first round of the Big Ten tournament against UCLA, and in their regular-season finale at Michigan.

"When we're clicking, I think we're really hard to beat," Fears said. "And day in and day out, it's a grind to keep getting better, and the end goal is to win championships. We want to win games, but championships is the goal.

Damari Wheeler-Thomas scored 16 points to lead 14th-seeded North Dakota State (27-8). The Summit League champions qualified for the NCAA Tournament for the sixth time in 18 seasons and first since the 2020 tournament that was canceled.

The Spartans shot 59 percent against the undersized Bison, scoring 44 points in the paint, with eight dunks. Michigan State shot 10 for 20 from 3-point range, while North Dakota State finished 6 for 25 from long distance.

"When you start making baskets, I think you get fooled that you can win games different ways," Izzo said. "You can win them different ways, but to win consistently, where you've got to come in night in, night out, play in different arenas, domes, this arena, pro arenas, you'd better bring your lunch bucket and your defense and your rebounding."

The Spartans had a 35-23 advantage on the boards and did not allow any second-chance baskets.

North Dakota State opened an early 8-5 lead before going more than six minutes without a field goal. Michigan State took command with an 18-2 run. The Spartans extended their lead with a 10-point run and led 45-25 at halftime.

Steady March

Michigan State improved to 51-26 in the tournament under Izzo during what is the longest active streak of March Madness appearances. The Spartans have not lost their opening game since playing in the First Four in 2019, and have not lost as the higher seed in a first-round matchup since 2016.

"We're blessed to have someone who's been through the ringer for 28 years straight in this tournament," Cooper said of Izzo. "It's comfortable for us to kind of look up to him and trust what he's telling us because we know he's been there."

Yuki Iwamura / AP

Michigan State forward Cameron Ward (3) dunks against North Dakota State on Thursday in Buffalo, N.Y.

Passing fancy

Michigan State's 26 assists were its most ever in an NCAA Tournament game.

Fears had double-digit assists for the 14th time this season. The Spartans scored 15 points in transition, with Fears lobbing a number of alley-oops to Cooper and Carr on the fast break

"I could care less if we run any plays," Izzo said. "I'd like to just get our fast break going and make that the biggest part of our offense."

Up next

Michigan State will try to reach the Sweet 16 for the 17th time under Izzo.

HARDEN

From page B2

Hood does not like to talk about himself or his accomplishments, instead giving the credit to his team and coaching staff. The results are hard to ignore. Brandywine is 100-8 over the last four seasons, believed to be the third-most wins over a four-season period in MHSAA history. Seniors Karleigh Byrd and Macy Pellow were a part of all 100 wins over that stretch and exit the program as the winningest players in southwest Michigan history.

"I couldn't have asked for a better school to play for," Byrd said. "I don't think we give [coach Hood] enough credit for how much he does for us – he's up at 3 a.m. watching film. Also, the girls, I've known them all my life. They buy in, they want to win, and they fought hard. Even the players who didn't get in the game were always encouraging. I couldn't ask for a better place to be."

What Hood has been able to build here at Brandywine is historic and should be appreciated. While the outcome was not what they had hoped for, Hood and the Bobcats are determined to break through and bring a state title back to the Bobcat den.

"This little community of Brandywine being here three times in a row is very impressive," Hood said. "You saw them battle. It's hard to get here, and we've done it three times in a row. It's hard to get over the top and we're still working at that, but these girls are champions. We're not just chasing rings; we're building champions."

LOSS

From page B2

"Kudos to Jackson Lumen Christi. Scott Stine is a phenomenal coach and they have a great team. We got off to a rough start and it's very difficult to contain Kenna Hunt and Lucy Wrozek. There's a reason why those two are Division I prospects. Kenna is probably the leading candidate right now for the 2028 Miss Basketball Award because I just voted for her. I'm proud of our girls for not packing it in after the first half," said Brandywine head coach Josh Hood.

"We lost seven seniors off last year's team. So even though we had that experience of being here we didn't have a ton of experience. There are a lot of new faces on our team this year playing new roles. Being here three years in a row is pretty impressive for a small school like ours. It's hard to get here. We play a tough schedule, but it's difficult to simulate playing in the big lights of the Breslin Center. These girls are champions though and great people."

Lumen Christi outscored Brandywine 11-7 during the second quarter to increase the Titans' lead to 29-10 at intermission. Lucy Wrozek scored six of the Titans' points in that period. Brandywine did a bit better making its shots, getting a layup and free throw from Lily Gill and two buckets inside from freshman Zaya Price.

The Titans took advantage of three layups and its perimeter shooting to outscore the Bobcats 15-12 in the third quarter. The Bobcats scored a majority of their points in the stanza off 8-of-12 free-throw shooting.

Lumen Christi took a 43-22 advantage over Brandywine into the fourth quarter.

Brandywine was unable to get any closer than 17 points on a pair of occasions during the fourth quarter. Brook Brumitt's three pointer (45-28) and a bucket inside from Zaya Price were as close as the Bobcats would get.

Photos by Nick Shelton / For Leader Publications

Lily Gill (11) pushes the ball up the floor while Lumen Christy's Lucy Wrozek (14) and Kenna Hunt (1) give chase.{/span}

Lumen Christi's all-state sophomore point guard Kenna Hunt was a tough matchup all day for Brandywine. Hunt finished the game with 16 points, seven rebounds, eight assists and one blocked shot. Senior Lily Ganton contributed 13 points and six rebounds for the Lady Titans and Wrozek added 10 points and four boards. Tristin Johnson added seven points, Ruby Boyce had five rebounds and Erin O'Dowd tallied four.

Zaya Price paced Brandywine with 18 points, nine rebounds, three assists and one blocked shot. Mackenna Price chipped in with 10 points and three rebounds. Lily Gill contributed seven points for the Lady Bobcats and Byrd added three points, three assists and two rebounds.

"We always know that if we can't get our offense going our defense will boost us. I think that we always just try to play together. We don't always give Coach Hood enough credit for what he does for us. Sometimes he's up at 3 a.m. watching film. I've known these girls all my life and they buy in, they fight hard and are always encouraging," said Gill reflecting on her four years in the program.

Lumen Christi also won the rebounding battle over Brandywine 28-20.

The contest was the final one for Brandywine's five seniors Macy Pellow, Sydney Olson, Makenzii Myer, Byrd and Brie Reese who won over 100 games during their varsity careers.

JACKSON LUMEN CHRISTI 51, BRANDYWINE 33

BRANDYWINE (33)
Karleigh Byrd 0 3-10 3, Zaya Price 7 3-4 18, Mackenna Price 1 0-2 2, Lily Gill 1 5-8 7, Brook Brumitt 1 0-0 3. Totals: 10 11-24 33.
LUMEN CHRISTI (51)
Kenna Hunt 7 2-4 16, Lily Ganton 5 0-0 13, Lucy Wrozek 4 2-2 10, Roby Boyce 1 0-0 2, Paige Lefere 1 1-4 3, Tristin Johnson 3 1-2 7. Totals: 21 6-12 51.

Brandywine	**3**	**7**	**15**	**8**	**— 33**
Lumen Christi	**18**	**11**	**15**	**7**	**— 51**

3-point goals – Brandywine 2 (Z. Price, Brumitt), Lumen Christi 3 (Ganton 3). Total fouls – Brandywine 9, Lumen Christi 17. Fouled out – none. Technical fouls – none.
Records – Brandywine 26-2, Lumen Christi 24-3.

Brandywine's Lily Gill (11) attempts a basket over a Lumen Christi defender during Thursday's Division 3 state semifinal game at the Breslin Center.

Three-peat chase

Ohtani, Dodgers try for a rare MLB feat as labor strife looms

BY JAY COHEN
AP SPORTS WRITER

MLB PREVIEW

It has been 26 years since a major league team won three consecutive World Series titles. That's the big challenge for Shohei Ohtani and the Los Angeles Dodgers this year.

Ohtani and company are bidding for baseball's first three-peat since the New York Yankees ruled the majors from 1998 to 2000. And the Dodgers might be better than ever before after adding closer Edwin Díaz and All-Star outfielder Kyle Tucker in free agency.

"When you're a Dodger, people want to take us down," manager Dave Roberts told his team during spring training. "They want to beat us, and I said it earlier, is it's a Game 7. So I think that we've got to look ahead and say that this is going to be harder than it's ever been."

It was hard last year, too. The Dodgers were pushed by the Toronto Blue Jays all the way to extra innings in Game 7 before they secured the franchise's third championship in six years and No. 9 overall.

The Blue Jays are among the Dodgers' top challengers once again this season after signing Dylan Cease in free agency. The list of championship contenders also includes Garrett Crochet and the Boston Red Sox and Alex Bregman and the Chicago Cubs, to go along with the Seattle Mariners, New York Yankees and New York Mets.

Here are a few more storylines for the 2026 season:

ROBOT UMPIRES HAVE ARRIVED

The Automated Ball/Strike system — aka robot umpires — is going to be used in major league regular-season games for the first time. Human umpires will still call balls and strikes, but teams can challenge two calls per game and use additional appeals in extra innings. Challenges must be made by a pitcher, catcher or batter — signaled by tapping their helmet or cap — and a team retains its challenge if successful. Reviews will be shown as digital graphics on outfield videoboards.

AP PHOTO

The Automated Ball/Strike System plays on the scoreboard after a pitch call was challenged.

AP PHOTO

New York Yankees' Aaron Judge hits a home run June 11, 2025, in Kansas City, Mo.

The strategy surrounding how teams use their challenges and who has clearance to appeal will be closely watched throughout the season.

OLD FACES AT NEW PLACES

After seven seasons and 264 homers — many of the titanic variety — Pete Alonso left the Mets in December for a $155 million, five-year contract with the Baltimore Orioles.

The slugging first baseman is hoping to power Baltimore back to the playoffs after it finished last in the AL East last season.

After Alonso departed, the Mets signed infielder Bo Bichette in free agency and traded for outfielder Luis Robert Jr. and pitcher Freddy Peralta. Bichette spent his first seven seasons with Toronto, and Robert moved on after six seasons with the Chicago White Sox. Peralta played for the Milwaukee Brewers for eight years before the trade.

Justin Verlander also has a new team. Well, sort of. The 43-year-old right-hander is back in Detroit after agreeing to a $13 million, one-year contract.

The three-time Cy Young Award winner went 183-114 with a 3.49 ERA while spending his first 12-plus seasons with the Tigers.

MILESTONE WATCH

Five sluggers are approaching 400 career homers. Yankees star Aaron Judge is up to 368 after the three-time AL MVP swatted 53 homers last year. Teammate Paul Goldschmidt is at 372, followed by San Diego Padres third baseman Manny Machado (369). First basemen Freddie Freeman (367) of the Dodgers and Bryce Harper (363) of the Philadelphia Phillies also are in the mix.

Kenley Jansen, who signed with the Detroit Tigers in December, needs 24 saves to become the third member of the 500 saves club, joining Mariano Rivera and Trevor Hoffman.

LABOR STRIFE

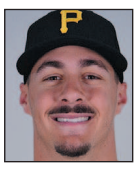
The collective bargaining agreement between Major League Baseball and the players' association expires Dec. 1, and the potential of another work stoppage is expected to hover over the sport throughout the 2026 season.

It looks as if management is likely to propose a salary cap, something that traditionally has been a red line for the union.

Rookies To Watch

Nick Kurtz and Drake Baldwin made a smooth transition to the major leagues last season. Kurtz was rewarded with the AL Rookie of the Year award, and Baldwin took home the NL honor. Here is a closer look at some of the rookies looking to have a similar impact this year:

PITTSBURGH PIRATES INFIELDER
Konnor Griffin



Widely regarded as the majors' top prospect, Griffin could make a push for Pittsburgh's second NL Rookie of the Year award in three seasons after Paul Skenes won in 2024. Griffin, a Mississippi native who turns 20 on April 24, hit .333 with 21 homers, 94 RBIs and 65 steals over three minor league stops last year. The shortstop was taken by the Pirates with the No. 9 pick in the 2024 amateur draft.

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS INFIELDER
JJ Wetherholt

St. Louis is working on a rare rebuild for the franchise, and Wetherholt's development is worth watching in terms of how long it might last. The 23-year-old infielder played college ball for West Virginia before he was selected by the Cardinals with the No. 7 pick in the 2024 amateur draft. He batted .306 with 17 homers, 59 RBIs and 23 steals over two minor league stops last year, finishing the season with Triple-A Memphis.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS PITCHER
Trey Yesavage

Yesavage, a 6-foot-4 right-hander with an unusual arm slot, helped Toronto reach the World Series in 2025. He went 3-1 with a 3.58 ERA in six postseason appearances, striking out 39 and walking 11 in 27 2/3 innings. Yesavage began last season at Class A Dunedin and posted a 5-1 record with a 3.12 ERA over four minor league stops before making his Blue Jays debut on Sept. 15.

BALTIMORE ORIOLES CATCHER
Samuel Basallo

Baltimore has quite the catching tandem with Adley Rutschman and Basallo, who made his major league debut in August. Basallo batted just .165 with four homers in 31 games with the Orioles, but he hit .270 with 23 homers and 67 RBIs in 76 games with Triple-A Norfolk. Rutschman remains the No. 1 catcher, but the 21-year-old Basallo also will see time at first base and designated hitter.

NEW YORK METS PITCHER
Nolan McLean

McLean was terrific in his first stint with New York last year, going 5-1 with a 2.06 ERA in eight starts. The 6-foot-2 right-hander, a third-round pick in the 2023 amateur draft out of Oklahoma State University, also struck out 57 in 48 innings. He is expected to be a key member of New York's rotation this season as the Mets try to rebound from a tough finish last year.

DETROIT TIGERS INFIELDER
Kevin McGonigle

The 21-year-old McGonigle was taken by Detroit with the No. 37 pick in the 2023 amateur draft. The shortstop batted .305 with 19 homers, 80 RBIs and 10 steals in 88 games over three minor league stops last year. He could play a major role for a Tigers team looking to contend for the AL Central title.

AP CONTENT BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
DESIGN BY ADAMS PUBLISHING GROUP/PAGINATION CENTER

Games to Watch

Mexico City is on the major league schedule. Same for the Field of Dreams in Iowa, and Historic Bowman Field in Pennsylvania. Here are some dates to remember for the upcoming season:

Opening day: Wednesday, March 25

New York Yankees at San Francisco Giants: The 2026 season begins with Aaron Judge and Co. visiting Rafael Devers and San Francisco for Tony Vitello's first game as Giants manager. Judge won his third AL MVP award last year, but the slugger remains in search of his first World Series championship. Vitello takes over a San Francisco team that has made just one playoff appearance since 2017. Devers anchors Vitello's lineup in his first full season with the Giants after he was acquired in a trade with Boston.

World Series rematch: Monday, April 6

Los Angeles Dodgers at Toronto Blue Jays: Shohei Ohtani leads Los Angeles into Toronto for its first matchup with the Blue Jays since their epic World Series in the fall. Ohtani and Co. are going for their third consecutive championship after outlasting Toronto in seven games last year. The Dodgers added Kyle Tucker and Edwin Díaz in free agency, and the Blue Jays bolstered their rotation by signing right-handers Dylan Cease and Cody Ponce. Infielder Kazuma Okamoto also came over from Japan.

Mexico City Series: Saturday, April 25

San Diego Padres at Arizona Diamondbacks: Manny Machado and the Padres face Geraldo Perdomo and the Diamondbacks in the first of two games at Mexico City's Estadio Alfredo Harp Helú. San Diego went 8-5 against Arizona last year on its way to a 90-72 record and an NL wild card. The Diamondbacks are hoping to return to the playoffs for the first time since they lost to Texas in the 2023 World Series.

All-Star Game: Tuesday, July 14

Philadelphia's Citizens Bank Park hosts the All-Star Game for the first time as the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary. The All-Star Game also was played in Philly at Veterans Stadium in 1996 and 1976, and at Shibe Park in 1952 and 1943. The NL beat the AL last year in Atlanta when Kyle Schwarber homered three times in the first All-Star Game swing-off.

Field of Dreams: Thursday, Aug. 13

Philadelphia Phillies at Minnesota Twins: Bryce Harper and the Phillies take on Byron Buxton and the Twins in Major League Baseball's third "Field of Dreams" game. The iconic site in eastern Iowa served as the home of the 1989 movie starring Kevin Costner and James Earl Jones. The White Sox beat the Yankees 9-8 in the first game in Dyersville in 2021, and the Cubs knocked off the Reds 4-2 in the second edition in 2022.

MLB Little League Classic: Sunday, Aug. 23

Atlanta Braves at Milwaukee Brewers: Ronald Acuña Jr. and Jackson Chourio look to put on a show as the Braves face the Brewers at Historic Bowman Field in the finale of a weekend series. Returning from a torn ACL, Acuña hit .290 with 21 homers and 42 RBIs in 95 games for the Braves last year. Chourio helped lead the Brewers to the NL Central title last season, batting .270 with 21 homers, 78 RBIs and 21 steals in 131 games.

Alonso returns: Monday, Sept. 14

Baltimore Orioles at New York Mets: Slugging first baseman Pete Alonso plays his first game at Citi Field since signing a $155 million, five-year contract with the Orioles in December. The 31-year-old Alonso was drafted by New York and swatted 264 homers for the Mets in seven seasons before departing in free agency. In one dizzying stretch in January, the revamped Mets traded for Freddy Peralta and Luis Robert Jr. and signed infielder Bo Bichette to a $126 million, three-year deal.

Playoff implications? Sunday, Sept. 27

Chicago Cubs at Boston Red Sox: Chicago and Boston begin the year with World Series aspirations, and they finish the regular season at Fenway Park. Alex Bregman hit .273 with 18 homers and 62 RBIs in his lone season with the Red Sox before signing a $175 million, five-year contract with the Cubs in free agency. Led by Garrett Crochet, Ranger Suárez and Sonny Gray, the Red Sox have one of the majors' best rotations.

Marquee Sports Network reaches agreement with Hulu, Amazon Prime to stream Cubs games

By MEGHAN MONTEMURRO
Chicago Tribune (TNS)

CHICAGO — Chicago Cubs fans will have more direct-to-consumer streaming options to watch games this year.

Marquee Sports Network has reached an agreement to expand its DTC footprint through two notable streaming services.

Starting Wednesday, Marquee is available for Hulu + Live TV subscribers. Additionally, Marquee can be streamed live on Amazon's Prime Video through a monthly subscription ($19.99) that will include Cubs games, pregame and postgame coverage and all other Marquee programming. Both DTC options are for in-market Cubs fans.

"We're committed to delivering world-class game broadcasts to our fans through our linear channel and our direct-to-consumer product," Cubs president of business operations Crane Kenney said in a statement. "By expanding our streaming distribution, we're providing more ways than ever to follow the Cubs all season long."

In January, Kenney told the Chicago Tribune the Cubs have more than 100,000 direct subscribers to Marquee since launching their DTC streaming option three years ago.

"It's changing, and it's changed because the number of cable subscribers has fallen off a cliff," Kenney said. "We're in the same boat as everyone else. Fortunately, Marquee stands alone, so we have to make smart decisions on how we spend our money. We made some decisions recently that were difficult. We'll continue to make decisions sometimes that will be difficult."

Within the last six months, those difficult decisions saw Marquee essentially shutter its digital online product after laying off multiple employees, shift to predominantly emphasizing its Cubs game production and air fewer spring training games this year. Marquee ultimately selected 11 Cactus League games to broadcast.

"A really hard decision, but it seemed like it made the most sense to us in terms of, like any budget, where do you want to cut and what do you want to emphasize?" Kenney said. "So we're going to emphasize the pre, the post and the games with the same technology, same talent, to give our fans the very best games. And we made that decision on spring training, we're going to do fewer."

Classifieds Marketplace

Niles, Niles Charter, Buchanan, Edwardsburg, Cassopolis, Dowagiac, Sister Lakes and the surrounding areas

25 N. 2nd St., Niles, MI 49120
(269) 429-1396

LeaderPub.com
legals@pmginmi.com
classified@heraldpalladium.com

0500 MERCHANDISE

LOOK!

CJ'S THIS N' THAT FLEA MARKET

"A little bit of everything and a whole lot of deals!'

Antiques, collectibles, new and used merchandise.

Vendor spots available!

6681 US Hwy 31
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Open Sat & Sun 11AM-5PM

574-807-5276

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
BERRIEN COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2025-0841-DE-M

Estate of:
Walter Robert Whitmyer, Jr.
Date of birth: 07/03/1946

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Walter Robert Whitmyer, Jr., died 08/26/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Taryn Weidner, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 1205 N. Front Street, Niles, MI 49120 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 03/26/2026

Randall G. Hesser P36450
Attorney name Bar no.
861 Parkway Ave.
Address
Elkhart, IN 46516
City, state, zip
574-294-7491
Telephone

Taryn Weidner
Personal representative
28883 CR 10
Address
Elkhart, IN 46514
City, state, zip

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
CASS COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2026-056-DE
Hon. Carol M. Bealor

Estate of:
Howard Kenneth Miller
Date of birth: 02/01/1935

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Howard Kenneth Miller, died 01/28/2024. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Marcus Alan Carlson, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M62 St. 10, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 03/05/2026

Randall G. Hesser P36450
Attorney name Bar no.
861 Parkway Ave.
Address
Elkhart, IN 46516
City, state, zip
574-294-7491
Telephone

Marcus Alan Carlson
Personal representative
25595 US 12
Address
Edwardsburg, MI 49112
City, state, zip
269-663-9402
Telephone

Niles Community Schools is accepting bids for roof improvements at Ballard Elementary. Please contact Carmi Design Group at 269-663-5073 for the full bid documents.

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF Cass

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE AND CREDITORS NOTICE

FILE NO
2026-063-DE

ESTATE OF:
Russell Aaron Brogdon
Date of Birth: February 20, 1968

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including creditors and heirs of the deceased whose address(es) are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:

Be advised that a Petition for Determination of Heirs has been filed with the Court and a hearing on said Petition will be held on **April 7, 2026, at 09:30 A.M.** via Zoom through the Cass County Law and Courts Building, 60296 M62, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The Decedent, Russell Aaron Brogdon, who lived at 22451 Painter Street, Edwardsburg, Michigan, died November 27, 2025.

Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Cynthia Brogdon, named personal representative, or to the probate court at 60296 M62, Cassopolis Michigan 49031 and the named personal representative within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.

March 16, 2026

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr. (P23000)
Attorney
Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120
(269) 683 - 8300

Cynthia Brogdon
Petitioner
c/o Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120-1310

Annual Performance Report for Housing The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indian's **Annual Performance Report for Housing** is available for any residents to review. You can view it on our website at Housing Programs – Pokagon Band of Potawatomi or come and review it at the Housing & Community Development office beginning Monday, February 23 through Monday, March 23, 2026. The address for Housing & Community Development is 57824 Potawatomi Trail, Dowagiac, MI 49047.
Migweth Thank you,

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF CASS

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE

In the matter of: THE RSSS TRUST of 2005

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Whose address(es) are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:

TAKE NOTICE: The decedent, Robert Lee Smith, who lived at 70105 Beach Drive, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112, died on January 26, 2026. There is no personal representative of the decedent's estate.

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the decedent's estate will be forever barred unless presented to Scott Smith, at 1360 Wood Hill Lane, Lake Forest, Illinois 60045, and Samantha Schuller, at 4 Lake View Rd., Hawthorn Woods, IL 60047, co-successor trustees of The RSSS Trust of 2005 dated September 16, 2022, within four (4) months of the date of publication of this notice.

Date: March 17, 2026

Petitioners:
Scott A. Smith
1360 Wood Hill Lane
Lake Forest, IL 60045
(847) 528-3868

Samantha Schuller
4 Lake View Road
Hawthorn Woods, IL 60047
(847) 420-1950

Attorney:
Janet G. Horvath-Bar No P68501
1251 North Eddy Street, Ste 203
South Bend, IN 46617
(574) 575-4147

0900 LEGALS

Economy Storage, 2206 Yankee Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday March 28, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Unit #	Name
9/185	Candy Whitmire
22	Amber Bedenfield
28	Emalee Anderson
50	Lillian Joyce Bennett
67	Jerome Jankowiak
82	Erica Pitone
94	Joshua Thompson
125/179	Steve Kelley
127/633	Chris Norris
145/467/468	Michael Merritt
148	Gloster Johnson
164	Bradley Hattenback
183	Cindy Fisher
184/66	Mary Anderson
190/306	Linda Nilson
191	Alan Smith
192	Patricia Yoder
211	Kimberlie Mervine
254	Paula Diane Brown
268	Dan Hoft
273	Tony Pompey
278	Chelsie Carlyle
282	Keely Collier
324	Woodrow Bowers
326	Seth Weaver
328	Kevin Reed
331	Valerie Outlaw
338	Frances Lamagro
342	Terrence Moss
346	DaMonica Williams
379	Bobbie Helms
389	Parnell Jenkins
410/534	Rebecca Coleman
429	Aaron Haynes
438	Adrianna Affriso
442	Dawn Hojara
451	Jean Fitch
452	Tyler Mahar
492/676	Malawi Association
530	Justin Landis
533	Ashley Scantlon
541	Nicole Hurt
639	Barry Brann
665	Rodney Prescott
677/567	Julie Potate

Niles U-Stor-It, 1314 E. Main Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday March 28, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.

47	Jasmine Collett
54	Cynthia Swisher

J & J Storage, 2220 S. 13th Street and 2627 S. 11th Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday March 28, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.

31/28	Christine Runner
57	James Colburn
220A	Susan Tanke
290A	Doug Mitchell
301A	Matt Mazingo
140	Ronnie West
176	Dacia Bush
227	Jennifer Nichols
228	Michael Hoadley
238/466	James Diss
263	Tamara Holmes
292	The Woodshed Crafts
312	Joseph Mayo
314	Tracey Parrish
327	Robert Davis
377	Christy Stevens
422	Jeremy Davis
452	Aaron Smith
481	Natosha Libertowski
509	Samantha Curtis

People Do Read Small Ads. You Did!

0900 LEGALS

Abandoned vehicle auction March 26, 2026 at 8:30am Road Runner towing and recovery

2014 Ford
Vin 1FADP3E28EL225495
2001 Ford
Vin 1FTRW07L41KA51660

Contact Road Runner Towing at 269-429-5080 Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5 PM for viewing locations and times social distancing rules still apply. Bidding starts at acquired fees

Niles Community Schools is accepting bids for lawn mower services for the 2026 season. Please contact Steven O'Connor at 269-684-8020 for the full bid documents.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Jefferson Township Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Synopsis, March 12, 2026
Supervisor Hass called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
Present: Brunner, Bundle, Gillam, Hass, Mendenhall.
REGULAR MEETING BOARD ACTION
• February 12, 2026 meeting minutes approved.
•Treasurer's Report given.
•Payment of bills authorized.
Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Locke, Clerk

PUBLIC NOTICE OF HERBICIDE APPLICATION
The Daltons Inc., its main office at 8857 N. Syracuse-Webster Rd., Syracuse, IN 46567, has been contracted by Cass County Road Commission to perform custom chemical vegetation control maintenance services at designated roadside guardrail locations throughout the county.

In doing so, they will be broadcast applying the following EPA-registered materials: Bayer/Envu Esplanade 200SC (Indaziflam), Bayer/Envu Method 240SL (Aminocyclopyrachlor), Alligare Imazapyr 4SL (Isopropylamine salt) or BASF Arsenal 4#.
Do not enter or allow entry into treated areas until sprays have dried.

This application will be completed by certified applicators employed by The Daltons Inc., during the months of April and/or May. Additional information may be requested by contacting David Mohler or Brad Bolinger at 574-267-7511

1000 HOME SERVICE DIRECTORY

Michiana Masonry & Construction
All your Masonry needs!
Chimney Cleaning
Insured & Bonded
Senior Discounts
269-362-1566

QUALITY CLOCK REPAIR
Front Street Framery
801 East Front Street
Buchanan, MI
House calls. Free estimates.
269-409-1031

AS A DEBT COLLECTOR, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement – Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM. on April 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default having been made in the terms and conditions of a certain mortgage made by James Snyder and Shella Ann Havener of Cass County, Michigan, Mortgagor to Fifth Third Bank (Western Michigan) dated the 28th day of May, 2019, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds, for the County of Cass and State of Michigan, on the 3rd day of July, 2019, Book 1157, Page 24, Instrument No. 154453 of the Cass County Records on which mortgage there is claimed to be due, at the date of this notice, for principal of $96,044.48 plus accrued interest at 5.00000% percent per annum. Which said premises are described as follows: All that certain piece or parcel of land situated in the Town of Howard, in the County of Cass and State of Michigan and described as follows to wit: Lot 50 Yankee Heights, according to the plat thereof recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 153, Cass County Records Commonly known as: 2550 Juniper Road, Niles, MI 49120 Tax ID: 1402022005000 If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale the borrower, pursuant to MCLA 600.3278 will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. The redemption period shall be six months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption. Dated: March 14, 2026, By: Benjamin N. Hoen #P-81415 Weltman, Weinberg & Reis Co., L.P.A. 5990 West Creek Road, Suite 200 Independence, OH 44131 Telephone: 216-739-5100 Fax: 216-363-4034 Email: bhoen@weltman.com WWR#: 22-000663-1 (03-14)(04-04)

2000 PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DIRECTORY

BRADY CONCRETE

Specializing in:
** Flat work of all types*
** Seawalls*
** Pole Barn Floors*
** Stamped Concrete*
** Bobcat Services*

Free Estimates, Insured
Fast, Dependable Service

269-445-3349 or
269-591-0100

2000 PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DIRECTORY

SLIM'S CONSTRUCTION

WE SPECIALIZE IN
POLE BARNS
ROOFING
& CONCRETE

Licensed & Insured

65280 M-66
Sturgis, MI 49091

SAM SCHWARTZ
269-221-0159

Modineer Company LLC
Assistant Business Unit Leader
Perform the manufacturing process engineering research, design, development, & day-to-day activities of metal component manufacturing processes & systems & directly supervise 2 employees.
Bachelor's degree in engineering management, Mechanical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, or Manufacturing Engineering is required (Foreign educational equivalent is acceptable). Also required is 6 months of employment experience as an Operations Consultant, Industrial Engineer, or Quality Engineer. Demonstrated ability in utilizing the following computer software is required through education, experience, or a combination of both education and experience: Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications (VBA); SolidWorks; and CATIA.
Place of employment is at Modineer Company LLC, 2121 W. Chicago Rd., Niles, MI 49120. Send resume to: Modineer Company LLC, Attn: Sabrina Pesce-HR Mgr., 2102 S. 11th St., Niles, MI 49120.

Township of Calvin Annual Meeting Notice
Annual Township Meeting to be held at the William J. Robinson Community Center (Calvin Township Hall), 18727 Mount Zion St. Cassopolis, MI 49031 Phone:269-476-2620

Annual Township Meeting
Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026
Meeting Time: 5:30 pm, Annual Township Meeting
Regular Township Board meeting immediately following.

This notice is posted in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended, (MCL 41.72a(2)(3)), and the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The Calvin Township Board will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio recordings of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting or public hearing upon 4-day notice to the Calvin Township Board. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township Board by writing or calling the following:
Contact Calvin Township Clerk at 2020.meanderson@gmail.com or 269-476-2620

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Proposed Property Rezoning
MILTON TOWNSHIP, CASS COUNTY, MI
32097 Bertrand Street, Niles, MI 49120

To: The residents and property owners of Milton Township, Cass County Michigan and any other interested parties.
The Milton Township Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing during its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., at the Milton Township Hall, 32097 Bertrand Street, Niles, MI 49120, for the purpose of considering an application from Philip and Lori Egert for rezoning of parcel 14-070-004-005-00 located at 68503 Surges Rd., Niles, MI, from RR, Rural Residential to A, Agricultural, pursuant to Chapter 18, Section 18.06 (b) of the Milton Township Zoning Ordinance.
Written comments will be taken from any interested persons concerning these proposed map amendments, at the Milton Township Hall, at the address above, at any time during regular business hours up to the night of the meeting. Any persons interested in this rezoning are invited to attend the Public Hearing. Copies of the Application to Rezone and applicable maps are available for inspection at the Milton Township Hall during regular business hours. If you are planning to attend this hearing, and require auxiliary aids or services, should contact the Township Clerk by calling 269-684-7262.

Milton Township Planning Commission

Howard Charter Township Cass County, Michigan Board of Trustees March 17, 2026
The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall.
Board Action
Approved Meeting Agenda.
Approved the minutes of the 2/17/26, 2/19/26 and 3/5/26, and 3/12/26 Board Meetings
Approved the financial report with an ending balance of 1,999,869.40 including a CD
Approved the payment of bills through March 17, 2026
Approved the departmental reports
Discussion on Sewer Rates
Approved 2026-2027 annual monthly meeting schedules
Approved the contracts with Siegfried Crandall, PC as the auditor and Berends, Hendricks & Stuit Insurance Agency as the insurance agent, Darr Phillips for ordinance enforcement cleanups, Darr Phillps for ordinance enforcement mowing and Snowplow. Bauckham, Thall et all for Attorney. Cass Count Sheriff Office for Law Enforcement, Michiana Cleaning for Office cleaning, and Zoning Solutions for Ordinance Enforcement.
Approved the contract renewals for the Building Inspector Adam Dahlgren, Electrical Inspector Ron Bellaire, Plumbing/Mechanical Inspector John Dobberteen, and Miss Dig Inspector Lisa Guyott and Northrup Assessing.
Appointed Chris Corzine as Fire Chief, Chris Korp as Assistant Fire Chief, and Tim Phillips as Captain and Fire Inspector and Chad Bundy as Lieutenant.
Approved the Supervisor, Cass County Sheriff Deputy and Zoning Solutions as ordinance enforcement officer for all ordinances, Zoning Administrator as an enforcement officer for the Zoning Ordinance, and the Fire Department Officers as enforcement officers for burning and fire ordinances
Approved Resolution 2026-007, the Salary Resolution,
Approved Resolution 2026-006, the General Appropriations Act Resolution
Approved the 2026-2027 Holiday Schedules
Approved the proposed 2026-2027 General Fund Budget
Approved the proposed 2026-2027 Ambulance, Street Light, Improvement Capital, Building, New Construction, Sewer, Fire Truck and Weed Eradication Funds Budgets
Approved 2026-2027 pay scale
Approved NATS local match $4080.00
Public Comment Public comment occurred
Adjourn the meeting at 7:30pm

RESERVE THIS SPACE
TODAY!

OUTDOORS

Submitting hunting or fishing photos

Have a behemoth buck, a tremendous turkey or super-sized salmon? Please submit photos to sports@TheHP.com.

Your photo must be in focus, all persons in the photo must be identified, and the general location of the hunt must be provided (for example, 10-point buck shot in Benton Township, black bear shot near Munising, Mich., etc.)

Photo provided / Brad Anderson

A male pileated woodpecker on March 1 at the suet feeder of Brad and Hannah Anderson of Bridgman.

Pileated woodpecker has made comeback in Michigan

On March 1, a male pileated woodpecker made himself conspicuous to the lens of Brad Anderson by partaking in the suet Brad and his wife Hannah and offered.

The pileated woodpecker is the largest woodpecker in Michigan.

Jonathan Wuepper
Southwest Michigan Wildlife

Discounting the almost certainly extinct ivory-billed woodpecker, the pileated reigns as the largest woodpecker in North America. It has a wingspan of about 26 to 29 inches and a total length, from head to tail, of about 16 to 19 inches. Plumages are similar in both sexes, with the exception of a red mark on each side of the male's cheeks. I often refer to this red mark as the male pileated's "mustache".

The pileated woodpecker currently ranges across all of Michigan and nearby states, although it is less common in the southeast counties where less second-growth forest exists. At the time of European settlement, the pileated woodpecker was abundant across Michigan. From the late 1800s until approximately the 1950s it was nearly extirpated from the heavy farming region and cities from Muskegon to Bay Counties south to the state line.

Since World War II, there has been a gradual increase in the population in the southern lower peninsula due to second growth forest. As of the mid 2020s, the pileated woodpecker is once again a breeding species in all of Michigan's 83 counties.

Along the wooded floodplain forests of the St. Joseph River during mid-February of this year, I witnessed an adult pair of pileated woodpeckers in courtship activity, drumming loudly and often during February and March. While adults pair bond for life, they continue the courtship drumming to reaffirm their nest site territory and ward off potential encroaching pairs or lone males.

Nesting begins in mid-to late April in our southern counties and in May in the Upper Peninsula. Cavity nests are excavated by both parents, usually in a dead or dying tree, and lined with wood chips. There, an average of four eggs are laid, and are incubated by both male and female.

The diet of the pileated woodpecker is primarily insects during the warm months, supplemented by fruits, nuts and sap. Its favorite food appears to be carpenter ants, both adults and larvae. In winter the species feeds on the larvae of ants, suet and fruit. It is a permanent resident across its range, but individuals may wander in winter in search of food.

On March 9, Steve Frappier of St. Joseph captured a photo of an eastern fox squirrel. The eastern fox squirrel is common in open and semi-open areas in Southwest Michigan. While it prefers oak-hickory forests, it is often found in suburban landscapes.

Speaking of squirrels, the groundhog, also called woodchuck, is also a squirrel. It is a true hibernator that emerges in February in our area. I saw my first woodchuck of the year on Feb. 28, which was a roadkill on Cleveland Avenue just south of the Galien village limits.

Jonathan Wuepper is an area naturalist. Report your sightings to him at wuepperj@gmail.com

Photo provided / Steve Frappier

An eastern fox squirrel on March 9.

Man circles Lake Superior, finding climbs, islands, waterfalls, parks ripe for discovery

By BOB TIMMONS
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

MINNEAPOLIS — A few trips in the 1970s to help build the Border Route Trail in the lake country between Minnesota and Canada sent a jolt of excitement through one of its volunteers.

Rudi Hargesheimer, a young University of Minnesota geography major at the time, was fascinated by the scenery along the North Shore of Lake Superior.

The trail work ended, but Hargesheimer returned again and again on his own time to hike and ski the parks and paths that strung together the shore's abundance of rivers, dramatic rock formations and boreal beauty.

Once he had the shore "memorized," his curiosity wandered farther north.

If the North Shore is so great, he thought, what was it like on the Canadian side?

Hargesheimer, a longtime manager at Midwest Mountaineering in Minneapolis who retired in 2016, has methodically answered his question over the last 40-plus years. He's taken as many as 15 trips around the big lake, making drives from 1,300 to 1,500 miles depending on the route. It's known as the Circle Tour.

Once past the Ontario, Canada, shores, he continued to investigate Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Wisconsin and even rediscovered parts of Minnesota.

Some of what he found – unexpected lake views and striking landscapes all to himself – excited and surprised him. He had a recurring thought: People don't know what they are missing. They should go north, not west.

Now, Hargesheimer is set on inspiring Circle Tour travelers with a new book about his experiences. Through his business North Shore Photo Art, he has published "Superior Trails: A Photo Tour of Lake Superior's Best Hiking Trails."

"The book is not intended as a trail guide," he said. "The idea is to whet people's appetite to go to these places, to not tell them everything they need to know."

Ontario's north shore was a quick lesson in the diversity of the Great Lake's landscapes and where it diverges from the feel of Minnesota's North Shore.

Hargesheimer documented scenes of rocks and beaches scoured by wind and waves, striking overlooks and waterfalls. But he also captured what makes Ontario's shore unique: Islands, breaking the water like exposed boulders, are ubiquitous. So, too, are inlets. A stark contrast to the ocean-like views from Hwy. 61.

He was awed by the vertical red-rock cliffs of Sleeping Giant Provincial Park, east of Thunder Bay. The scale rivaled western mountain landscapes, Hargesheimer said, and you won't fight the crowds.

He returned repeatedly to a Canadian national park on Superior's northeast shore, too.

Sarett Nature Center

Sarett Nature Stewards: 2-4 p.m. each Wednesday. This program is a way to experience Sarett in a whole different way. By being a nature steward you are helping Sarett but you also gain a sense of well-being. Sarett's crew will teach you many different skills such as collecting viable seeds for future planting, how to identify invasive species from native ones, removing invasive plants, and more. Ages 10+.

Birding for Beginners: 9-11 a.m. March 28, April 11, April 18 and May 2. This introduction will cover everything you need to know about birding, whether you are wondering which birds are visiting your feeders or if you want to go far afield. Sarett will even provide binoculars for you to use during class time. Cost is $5 per class for members, $7 for non-members. Call 927-4832 to register.

Email info for Get Outdoors to sports@TheHP.com, or call 429-1294 by Monday.

Raucous bird tornado touches down as snow geese make annual flight to Arctic

By MARK SCOLFORO and TASSANEE VEJPONGSA
Associated Press

KLEINFELTERSVILLE, Pa. — A few dozen birdwatchers gathered in the predawn darkness to wait for the moment when thousands of migrating snow geese stopped honking and preening to suddenly take flight from a Pennsylvania reservoir.

The mesmerizing display, about an hour after sunrise, was over almost as soon as it began. The birds circled a few times and then headed out to neighboring farm fields, seeking unharvested grains and other sustenance on their epic annual spring flight northward into New York state and Quebec.

The Pennsylvania reservoir was built a half-century ago to attract waterfowl, and over the years the gaggle has grown. Pennsylvania Game Commission environmental education specialist Payton Miller described it as a raucous bird tornado that lifts off the water.

"All it takes is for me to come out here on a really nice morning where there's a huge morning flight and I'm kind of reminded how awesome it is to see such a large number of such a beautiful bird," Miller said. "I never get sick of it."

Among those taking it all in was Adrian Binns, a safari guide from Paoli, Pennsylvania, who went to the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area for "the whole enjoyment of seeing something you don't see every day."

Snow geese have been arriving in growing numbers at the 6,300-acre Middle Creek property since the late 1990s. At this time of year, they have just spent months along the Atlantic coast, from New Jersey south to the Carolinas, with many of them overwintering on the Delmarva Peninsula that forms the Chesapeake Bay.

They don't stay long at Middle Creek – it's just a way station on their journey to summer breeding grounds in the Canadian Arctic and western Greenland. But for a few short weeks, they are the main attraction at Middle Creek, which draws about 150,000 visitors annually – including about a thousand hunters.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission, which owns Middle Creek, says about 100,000 snow geese were roosting there on the busiest day last year, on par with recent peak activity but below the single-day record of about 200,000 on Feb. 21, 2018.

Snow geese are doing well, but their large numbers have come with a cost. According to a 2017 study published by Springer Nature, greater snow geese grew in population from about 3,000 in the early 20th century to some 700,000 by the 1990s. By some estimates, there are about a million of the birds now – along with maybe 10 million of lesser snow geese, which are smaller – that also breed in the Arctic.

The number of migrating tundra swans at Middle Creek, while far lower, has also increased over time, from a dozen or so in the mid-1970s to 5,000 or more in recent years. Middle Creek birders have also identified more than 280 bird species on the site, among them bald eagles, northern harriers, ospreys and owls.

As snow goose numbers have boomed in recent decades, wildlife officials in the U.S. and Canada have navigated a balancing act involving hunting regulations, concerns about crop damage, shifts in migration and changes to overwintering patterns. Environmental damage from overgrazing in the Arctic has led experts to conclude that the birds are overabundant.

David M. Bird, a McGill University wildlife biology professor, described the population as "probably one of the biggest conservation problems facing wildlife biologists in North America today." Snow geese feed by pulling up plants by the roots, which damages habitats for themselves, various birds and other wildlife.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission reported recently that avian influenza viruses, present in the state since 2022, continue to circulate among the state's wild birds.

Robert F. Bukaty / AP

Snow geese take off from a reservoir at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, on March 6 in Kleinfeltersville, Pa.

DEALS ON WHEELS

$0 DOWN

SPRING INTO $AVINGS!

2004 FREIGHTLINER THOMAS

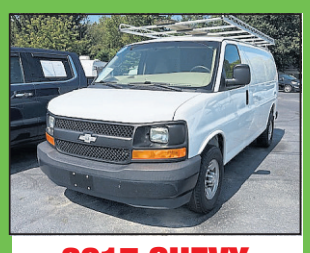
Ready to work on a budget.

Only $10,000

2018 DODGE JOURNEY CROSSROAD

Just in!! Clean with only 97k miles

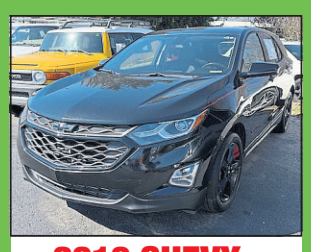
Only $12,900



2017 CHEVY EXPRESS 2500

Cargo rack, full power options

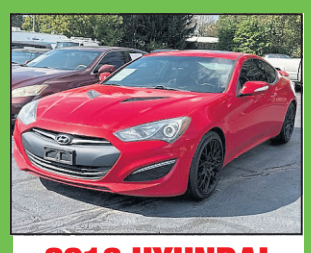
Only $13,700



2019 CHEVY EQUINOX LT

AWD, Sport Appearance Pkg.

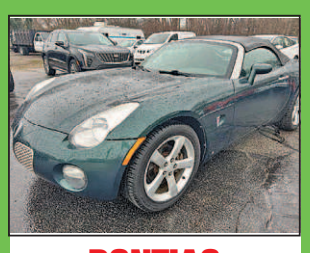
Only $13,900



2013 HYUNDAI GENESIS COUPE

Very rare, R-track pack

Only $13,900



PONTIAC SOLSTICE

Low miles, great shape... Nice car to drive to car shows.

Only $13,900

2018 FORD EXPLORER

Save thousands!

Only $14,620

2003 FORD THUNDERBIRD

Just in!! Showroom new

Only $14,900

2018 KIA STINGER GTI

Just in!! Ready to Cruise!!

Only $15,900

2019 HONDA HRV AWD

Wholesale priced

Only $19,125

2024 NISSAN SENTRA

Just in!! Like new for less!

Only $19,775

2020 NISSAN PATHFINDER SL

4WD, Third Row Seating, Only 90k miles!

Only $21,900

2022 KEYSTONE CT3400

Like new but half the price

Only $22,200

2021 CHRYSLER PACIFICA

Just in!! Low miles.

Only $23,700

2023 NISSAN ALTIMA SR

1 owner, just in! Like new with a discounted price

$23,900

2024 FORD EDGE

AWD, Leather, Third Row Seats!!

Only $24,900

2025 MAZDA 3

Like new, one owner, only 17k miles!

Only $25,500

2018 FORD F-150 XLT SUPERCAB

Just in!! Ecoboost with only 90k miles

Only $27,900

2023 CHRYSLER 300

Just in, off lease. 12,000 miles with every option

Only $29,800

2025 CHEVY EQUINOX LT

AWD, Like New for LESS!

Only $32,900

2022 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500 LT

1 owner, like new and 20" wheels!

$33,650

2020 CADILLAC ESCALADE

Luxury Edition w/all the Bells & Whistles!

Only $34,975

2024 FORD E-350 CARGO

16ft box trucks with miles in the 40's. Like new for half the price. 2 left!

Only $37,900

2020 RAM 3500 TRADESMAN

Rust free, Cummins diesel, flat bed ready to work!

Only $39,500

2022 CHEVY SILVERADO LT 1500

4 x 4, Only 26k miles, Like new!! One owner.

Only $39,900

2024 FORD EXPLORER LIMITED

One owner! Like new with all the options and only 29k miles!

Only $39,800

2023 GMC CANYON AT4

Just In!! Only 22k miles, like new & loaded!!

Only $41,975

2023 FORD TRANSIT

12 Pass., Only 58k Miles! Ready for Spring Break!

Only $43,400

2023 CHEVY SILVERADO 2500HD LT

1 Owner, Duramax Diesel, 4x4, Z71, Ready to Work!!!

Only $49,900

2020 LINCOLN NAVIGATOR

Just In! Only 69k Miles, 7 Pass., Leather, Loaded!

Only $49,900

SEE A STAR IT'S A 1 OWNER CAR

269-783-3325 • M-51 DOWAGIAC